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The Barrel of a Gun

Sir Harold Wilson was not the last man to imagine that he had solved the problem of Rhodesia, only to find it slipping out of his hands. In 1976 Dr Kissinger thought that he had found the elusive formula and had squared Smith, Vorster, Mugabe, the 'front-line' presidents and everyone else concerned. Within a few months this house of cards had collapsed – appropriately at Geneva where, if another Kissinger vision had been realised, Israel and the Arab states ought now to be amicably working out a peace settlement. Recently various 'informed sources' have spread the word that Dr Owen is on the verge of getting everything sewn up. We can only hope that the Foreign Secretary himself has not succumbed to this euphoria.

When he took office and began to grapple with the problem, Dr Owen had certain useful assets. He quickly established a good working relationship with a US Administration which, unlike its predecessor, is not obsessed with keeping out the Cubans. He earned African confidence (or as much of it as, for reasons rooted in a melancholy past, can ever be granted to a British politician) by stating clearly that the liberation of Zimbabwe was the desired objective. And he saw the futility of round-table conferences between men whose aims are so opposed that compromise is a meaningless concept.

It is now said that all the issues have been resolved except one – the nature of the forces who are to ensure public security during the transition to African rule. Literally, this may be true. But if it is taken to mean that only one minor detail remains to be regulated, no notion could be more misleading. Politics, in such a situation, is nakedly about power; and power in crucial weeks or months means power for the future. If it is held through the formative period by Smith's Rhodesian army and police, government will remain in 'responsible hands' as these are conceived by Smith; the white-dominated structure of authority will endure, probably behind a multi-racial facade. If the army posts and police stations are taken over by Mugabe's guerrillas, they will be able to achieve their aim of making Zimbabwe a liberated nation as that term is understood in Angola and Mozambique. Realism compels the admission that there is no third option.

Mr Mugabe evidently thinks that he is within sight of victory; and so he is, but only if he acts wisely. He has strong cards in his hands, but not yet enough for a grand slam. The history of guerrilla war shows that the crowning victory, symbolised by entry into the capital, can be secured in only two ways: either by outside help (Tito's partisans liberated most of Yugoslavia, but the Soviet Army entered Belgrade) or by political change within the opposing side (the decisive factor in Algeria, Vietnam and the Portuguese colonies). If Mugabe is to win without more years of destructive warfare, he needs to broaden his political base. He has already done that, to some extent, by forming an alliance with Mr Nkomo; but nothing now could do more to frustrate Smith's strategy – which has always relied heavily on divisions among Africans – than an understanding between the Patriotic Front and Bishop Muzorewa. The grand object, after all, is a transfer of power approved by Britain, the US and the world at large, which also neutralises the risk of South African intervention. The more it appears that Mugabe is the kind of leader who intends to shoot other claimants to popular support as soon as he attains power, the less likely he is to achieve that.

Britain, however, cannot decide the character of an independent Zimbabwe. We might have done so had we pursued different policies 50 or even 20 years ago, but now we lack the moral authority; and in realistic terms the ambition is clearly futile. A modest view of our obligations is therefore necessary. We are not compelled to endow Zimbabwe with a democratic, humane, high-principled or attractive government. We are committed to ensure, by bringing about the capitulation of the Smith regime, that it acquires an African government. But beyond that we have perhaps another obligation – to do our best to make sure that it is not one that owes its whole authority to the barrel of a gun.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Phasing out Phases

If you are a private sector employee, in a profitable firm, with *either* a benevolent employer *or* a strong union, and if your pay agreement is due for renewal in the autumn, bully for you. Go on, spoil yourself. Have a fling. Throw your cap over the moon. Order a bath of asses' milk ('Pasteurised, sir?' 'No thank you, Jeavons, up to my armpits will be enough') and indulge in a good wallow. If on the other hand you are a public sector employee, in an ailing industry somewhere in cash-limit country, you would be wise to keep your head down, tighten your belt, throw your cap *under* the moon and save your pennies for a weekend in Spain. Good luck to you. You are about to be declared Public Enemy Number One. Your identikit portrait has already been circulated to all government departments. The ports have been alerted. There is a close watch on all trains, and in the railway station you may expect a heavy hand to come down on your shoulder, as you try to slip through the percentage barrier.

Yes, we have passed beyond the timespan of Phase Two. But what Phase are we entering? A moment ago we stepped into the Tardis. The lights flashed, the controls whirred, Dr Healey uttered some dire warnings, and the machine rematerialised in a familiar landscape. Stepping out again, we are at first unable to perceive the difference, unless it be that the climate has improved. Glad of the fresh air, we take a few tentative steps across the field, not noticing the slimy green monsters which observe us from the thickets. And just as we begin to see that something has gone wrong, the door of the Tardis slams shut behind us, the light flashes on the roof, and the time machine disappears from sight.

Phase One was the era of good intentions; it was built on the memory of social strife, industrial disputes, shaving in the dark. By the time Phase Two came round, we knew we had been tricked – but what could we do? Every time we opened our mouths to say 'Excuse me, but couldn't we just –', the pound gave a loud groan and fell groaning on the floor, clutching its stomach. 'Now look what you've done,' said Healey, 'just *look what you've done*. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves.' We apologised, and kept quiet, but it was at that moment we resolved not to go through with Phase Three. We'd had enough. For a year we kept fairly quiet, and now here we are in Phase X. What will Phase X be like? What sort of monsters are there lurking in the thickets?

In some parts of the Labour Left there is considerable optimism about Phase X. Since the TGWU conference turned its back on the advice of Jack Jones, and since it became clear that phases were being phased out, and since reports began appearing in the papers to the effect that EEC observers couldn't care less if wages rose by 15 per cent, it suddenly seemed that the future might be rosier than expected. The Government would 'maken vertue of necessitee', wages would rise, demand would rise, in default of a wages policy the Government would be obliged to tighten price controls further, life would improve, the balance of payments would continue to improve, reserves would go on swelling, and inflation . . . Yes well, inflation. Hmmm. At all events, it seemed possible that trade union demands might push the Government into the right direction. Who knew? It might even become possible to win the next election.

The Left has had some good luck recently. The court decision on the Grunwick claim has proved a sore disappointment to the Conservatives. At the time of writing it looks as though the Chancellor will modify the Finance Bill in order to meet some aspects of the Rooker-Wise amendment (which if it happened would prove a triumphant vindication of back-bench power). Deeper down, it may well be that the estrangement between the unions and the parliamentary Left, signalled by the public row between Jack Jones and Ian Mikardo at the Labour conference two years ago, is finally coming to an end. The Left would prefer to speak on behalf of the whole movement, rather than merely on its own behalf. Come autumn, it looks very much as if the old alignments will be back with us once again. Cheerful news, for those as liked those old alignments.

And yet, and yet. It is difficult to believe that the optimists are right. For the fact is, whatever the economic prospects in the near future, the political prospects are far from happy. It is highly likely that Phase X will see an increase in internecine strife within the ranks of Labour. If the Government is losing the partnership of the TUC, it remains perforce in partnership with the Liberals. The pact may have all the advantages claimed on its behalf, but it remains a gauntlet thrown down at the feet of the Left. In the forthcoming by-elections, as in the Saffron Walden by-election (whose happy result has warmed the heart of Steel), the Liberals will go on presenting themselves as the tamers of the socialist lion. While the Tories will mock the ineffectuality of the Government, the Liberals will proclaim that they have caponised the administration. The greater the success of the pact from the Liberal point of view, the greater the humiliation for the Left. The more the Government consults with the Liberals, the more it will be forced to take account of the Left. There will be more revolts, more principled stands, more Rooker-Wise amendments. As the pact grows older, the memory fades of that night when it looked as if there would have to be a general election. As the memory fades, the resolve stiffens.

This would not be such a problem if the Liberals would only concentrate a little more on being the party of Charming Bright Ideas, like that Young Liberal plan that 'cyclists should be allowed to use disused railway tracks'. If Steel filled out his shopping lists with schemes of such a kind, what fun life would be. The Liberals could also do much to raise the moral tone of the Government. For instance, it is hardly likely that, after this week's court decision against *Gay News*, Jim Callaghan will be rushing to abolish the crime of blasphemous libel. But if Steel meant what he said in his Llandudno speech last year, this is precisely the sort of reform he should be thinking of. Is it not disgusting to live in a society which makes convicts of the publishers of bad poems, Mr Steel?

But, tush! What would they say in Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles? (Mr Steel's aim, *au fond*, may be summed up as 'Government of the Peebles, by the Peebles, for the Peebles'.) The Liberals will not be seeking to abolish blasphemous libel. They will be seeking to abolish income tax (the Pardoe Plan). And they will be seeking to fashion a Labour Party after their own image. At the same time, if government policy on incomes continues to move in the direction it seems to have taken, public-sector wage claims will become the dominant feature of everyday life.

To older hands this may have a rather familiar, and ominous, ring to it, but Phase X will be different in one respect from previous periods of wages militancy. For now it happens to suit the Tory book to encourage industrial unrest (within certain limits, natch). The Tory press has developed a remarkably open mind on the justice of wage claims, particularly those that may be particularly embarrassing to this particular Government. Nor can we expect the BBC to be in the vanguard of the fight for pay restraint (they are among the first in the queue for wage rises in September). We may expect a Phase X as remarkable for its industrial militancy as Phase One was for the lack of it. Which means, of course, that Labour is going to have to forget a lot of its past rhetoric, and think of another basis on which to appeal to the electorate, when Phase X draws to its natural term, and it is time to start canvassing once again.

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Alexander Cockburn

Israel and the US

Let me start by quoting from a letter to the *New York Times*:

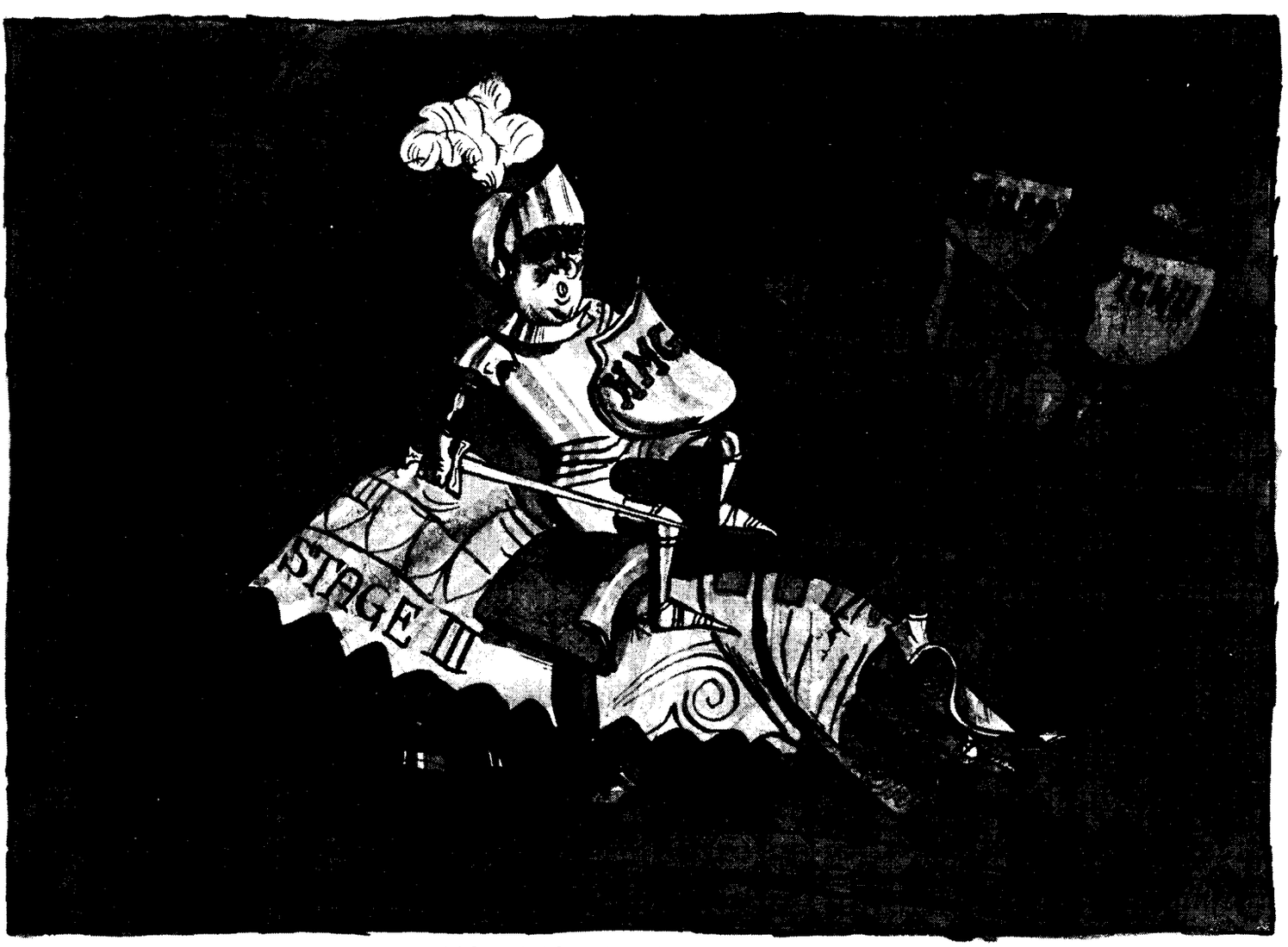
> Among the most disturbing political phenomena of our time is the emergence in the newly created state of Israel of the Freedom Party, a political party closely akin in its organisation, methods, political philosophy and social appeal to the Nazi and Fascist parties . . . The current visit of Menachem Begin, leader of this party, to the United States is obviously calculated to give the impression of American support of his party in the coming Israeli elections, and to cement political ties with conservative Zionist elements in the United States . . . It is imperative that the truth about Mr Begin and his movement be known in this country . . . The undersigned . . . therefore take the means of publicly presenting a few salient facts concerning Begin and his party and of urging all concerned not to support this latest manifestation of fascism.

The undersigned included Albert Einstein, Hannah Arendt, Sidney Hook and others, and the letter was published on 4 December 1948. It is of interest not only for the ironies it evokes on the eve of Mr Begin's arrival in Washington next Tuesday, nor merely for the fact that it is being disseminated from quarters unsympathetic to Israel in Washington; but also because it focuses attention on a curious absence of such passions in public discussion here of Begin's trip, of the nature of his Government and of the attitude of the United States towards it.

In last year's presidential campaign Senator Henry Jackson was the initial favourite of many important American Jewish organisations and Jimmy Carter excited – partly because of his Southern Baptist background – suspicion. By the time of the election in November this had been alleviated. In June of 1976 he had stated that a change in Arab attitudes to Israel was a precondition of peace. He did not then speak of 'a homeland' for the Palestinians, but rather of Jordanian territory ceded for their use and administered by Jordan. On many other matters – pre-eminently aid to Israel and arms transfers – he was emphatically pro-Israel.

In March of this year, at a town meeting in Clinton, Massachusetts, Carter invoked the right of the Palestinians to 'a homeland'. By the time he met President Assad of Syria in April he was saying the same thing: 'There must be a resolution of the Palestinian problem and a homeland for the Palestinians.' And his linkage of such a homeland with Jordan was far less clear. More broadly his position amounted to this: minor adjustments in the pre-June 1967 boundaries and at the same time security for Israel – a long-time US position; a homeland for the Palestinians; and a call for genuine peace.

At the same time as official US policy was being revealed in an often spasmodic and casual fashion, certain important developments were evident in the American-Jewish community itself. A small doveish group called 'Breira' began to arouse attention and emotion seemingly far in excess of its weight in the Jewish-American power structure. Members of Breira argued that the unreflecting loyalty of American Jews to official Israeli policy had cause an ossification of creative political and cultural discussion; that the debate in Israel provoked by doves such as General Matti Peled and others was tragically absent among Jews in the United States; that, indeed, the cultural and psychological life of the diaspora had become overly conditioned by, and dependent on, perpetual crisis in the Middle East and the paramount question of the security of the state of Israel, of supporting and funding it.



'A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!'

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Breira came under heavy fire from official American-Jewish organisations, not merely for such sins as attending meetings with representatives of the PLO in Washington, but also – in a much more general way – for taking the debate out of the community and for exposing, by public statements, strains within it. But while some important American Jews assailed Breira and others defended it, another less palpable phenomenon was occurring. The general political weight of American Jews is, of course, a commonplace and the specific lobbying power of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Washington underestimated by only the most foolish of politicians. The committee is quite capable of organising the dispatch of 3,000 letters to some object of pressure within a couple of days.

Yet as the Administration's policies emerged in the weeks before the Israeli elections remarkably little pressure on Carter was in evidence. Leading pro-Israeli politicians in Congress, even in the wake of his remarks during Assad's visit, made no clamour. Indeed, it seems plausible to argue that the Labour government and Shimon Peres were not ultimately intransigent in the face of Carter's positions, were rather bowing before the inevitable, and American Jewry was reacting accordingly.

All this changed after 17 May. The *bouleversement* of the Administration was well evoked by the alleged sight of Carter's security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski snatching the dispatch containing the first intimation of the Likud victory from an aide's hand and exclaiming that it could not be true. The CIA, as so often in the Middle East, had forecast wrongly. And in the wake of charges by Labour politicians in Israel that Carter had lost them the election, the atmosphere immediately sharpened.

Begin made his famous victory visit to a settlement, Carter made some sharp reiterations of his basic policy stance. Amid some semantic debates as to whether Begin should be called a terrorist or not (albeit a former one) it appeared possible that some considerable public discussion here on the political nature of Begin's coalition and of the attitude of American Jewry – unaccustomed to anything but Labour rule – to its policies might begin.

Such views were thoroughly unrealistic. All the leading American Jewish organisations immediately began to close ranks round Begin and Begin's Israel. Right after the election, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, head of the conference of presidents of major Jewish organisations, flew to Israel to talk with Begin. It is probable that Schindler suggested to Begin that he moderate talk about liberated territories on the West Bank and the like and speak rather of his open mind on all questions. It is certain that Schindler spoke via a telephone and loudspeaker system from Tel Aviv to American Jewish leaders in New York, reassuring them about Begin and in effect expressing the subsequent consensus – solidarity before any criticism.

The pressure on the Administration is now very visible. Senator Jacob Javits of New York, a leader of the American Jewish political community (who in 1976 had been saying that so far as the new settlements were concerned 'The Israelis are strictly on their own') berated Carter in the Senate for demanding too much of Israel. He was joined by other liberal Republican senators. By the end of the first week of this month Carter was meeting with 53 American Jewish leaders in the White House and expressing his unswerving commitment to Israel, his lack of sympathy for a separate Palestinian state, his demand for full recognition by the Arab states of Israel, his open-mindedness on boundaries, his preparedness to furnish military material. After the meeting one of the visitors remarked accurately: 'It cannot be said that the Jewish community has not had access to the White House.'

Thus, on the eve of Begin's visit, there has been a diminution in intensity of expectation of what might happen. People talk of Begin's ability to charm and the importance Carter appears to attach to 'personal' relationships, even while conceding incompatibility of views. Nonetheless amid the present somewhat uncanny calm one can clearly discern deeply pessimistic presentiments: that war in the Middle East may be inevitable in the next few months, that the determined power of the American Jewish lobbying effort may ultimately lead to a backlash and hence profound schism in American political life; that in the last analysis the two governments are on a collision course so far as the terms of peace in the Middle East are concerned. Such propositions can be persuasively advanced. But as of now – though possibly not for long – the most surprising thing is the relative placidity with which Begin's government and Begin's visit are being publicly discussed, both among American Jews and the citizenry in general.

New York

Peter Dunn

NAFF in Thurberland

James Thurber's *The Day the Dam Broke* offers a salutary paradigm of the Grunwick affair. In Thurber's short story three men broke into a preoccupied canter in downtown Columbus, Ohio, thereby spreading panic among their fellow citizens. Within ten minutes everybody else on the High Street was running. The townspeople were convinced that the dam had broken and was about to engulf them.

Likewise, at Grunwick, the activities of the National Association for Freedom have provoked Parliament, the judiciary and the trade unions into a political stampede. No one has been more surprised, or more gratified, by the sheer volume of swaying uproar than the three leaders of NAFF – John Gouriet, ex-major and NAFF's full-time administrator, Robert Moss, its short-fused director and a journalist who writes very long letters to the newspapers when they sting him, and Norris McWhirter, a deceptively meek-looking man who publishes the *Guinness Book of Records*.

In the two years since it was launched NAFF has been dogged by incipient obscurity. Gouriet, it is true, achieved a certain fame in January when NAFF stopped the postmen's proposed ban on South African mail but public interest soon wavered and new causes provoked by the case seemed depressingly trivial after the warm glow of the TV lights. One man wrote in to complain about some council trees casting shade over his cabbage patch. Gloomily the three men considered tackling the IBA over the Sex Pistols' fracas with Bill Grundy but the incident was already three months old and the campaign was still-born.

A curious factor of some NAFF causes is how they seem to blossom when someone out on the perimeter is getting punched on the nose. Violence repels yet morbidly fascinates some of the association's sharpest proponents of law and order. Gouriet asks visiting press men not to identify the location of his house in Hampshire and even NAFF's gloomy little office in Grape Street, London, was until quite recently on the secret list.

Of course, Norris McWhirter's brother, Ross, was murdered by the IRA and his death is, in fact, frequently offered as one of the main reasons for NAFF's existence. 'We owe it to Ross,' a NAFF spokeswoman says, 'to carry on the sort of work he would have liked to have done.' McWhirter's posthumous role as the founding martyr of NAFF is actually little more than fantasy, despite the fact that the association was officially launched five days after his murder.

The truth is that Ross McWhirter had little or nothing to do with the formation of NAFF. His right-wing activities, associated with Lady Birdwood's campaign against immigration, were anathema to the discontented industrialists who first pushed out the NAFF boat. 'Ross's political judgment was bloody awful,' says one senior member of NAFF's 50-member council. 'He may have given some help to Norris in drawing up our Charter of Rights but, in fact, he was never a member of NAFF.'

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NAFF's real origins – as a grass roots branch of Aims of Industry, capable of attracting recruits who might have been deterred by Aims' 'big business' image – are clear from minutes of a NAFF meeting held in August 1975, four months before Ross's death. The minutes record that Mr Michael Ivens, director of Aims of Industry and still a member of NAFF's council, 'reported on a very successful meeting arranged by NAFF on the 6 August at which Mr Chapman Pincher spoke of the grave dangers facing Britain.' The minutes go on:

> This meeting was attended, at very short notice, by about 30 senior industrialists and businessmen who agreed on the necessity for an association such as ours to fight for the maintenance and extension of freedom. It was agreed that once the association had a booklet containing its terms of reference and a charter of its objectives, we could go back to these industrialists for their support.

NAFF's association with other 'freedom' groups – like General Sir Walter Walker's Civil Assistance movement which was being subverted by public ridicule at the time – was even then ambivalent. 'After discussion,' the minutes recorded, 'it was agreed that the time was not right for liaison with General Walker.' NAFF's dilemma was neatly encapsulated in a letter written by Gouriet to a member of Civil Assistance last summer:

> I wish we could resolve this matter. We all have a high regard for Walter Walker. Unfortunately, the public impression of Civil Assistance is that it is a 'private army' although as we made clear on many platforms nothing could be further from the truth. Nevertheless, the 'left' did a good smear job when it started, and we do not want to attract similar adverse publicity. Therefore, while we welcome individual members to join us and encourage local cooperation, we are not in a position to announce a merger.

Gouriet's letter meant that NAFF had learnt valuable lessons from the shambles of Walker's hapless group of whistle-blowers. A moderate image would be carefully established with a council chaired by Lord De L'Isle and representing as broad a section of middle-class indignation as possible. Council members include Tory MPs, writers (John Braine, who also joined Civil Assistance at one time, and Peregrine Worsthorne), sportsmen (Budge Rogers OBE and Alec Bedser OBE), academics, industrialists, the odd military man and even a vicar – the Rev. Basil Watson OBE, RN, of St Lawrence Jewry, London. The fact that this council has not met to ratify any of NAFF's decisions in the Grunwick dispute, and is not due to meet until the end of this month, is somewhat airily dismissed by Gouriet who says such responsibility is delegated to a small management committee.

Moderation apart, another perhaps more important reason why NAFF keeps an official barge pole between itself and Civil Assistance, which is now run by a retired Wing-Commander, is to prevent problems arising over leadership. Experience has shown that whenever patriots get together in strength their tendency is to raise sharp questions about each other's competence. NAFF has survived for two years because control of the association has remained in the hands of three men who work reasonably well together in harness. McWhirter initiates the strategy, Gouriet promotes it and Moss is the heavy man, always eager to have the last 2,000 words on any subject. Lady Birdwood is welcome to send a cheque to support the Grunwick campaign; Birdwood's brigadiers waving brooms would be another matter.

Maintaining an uncomplicated freewheeling leadership is important to NAFF's survival and to a philosophical outlook which frequently resembles the anti-Federal instincts found in small communities of the American Deep South. Unlike the National Federation of Self-Employed, which left NAFF last year and is currently suffering from yet another bout of internal bleeding, NAFF does not want to become a risible right-wing parody of the society it seeks to cure.

Surprisingly, NAFF claims that it is not a right-wing organisation at all and continues to assert this despite the lack of any cause on its roll of honour which could be remotely described as left-wing. Both Stephen Haseler and Douglas Eden, 'Gaitskellites' who run the Social Democratic Alliance, write for NAFF's paper *The Free Nation*. NAFF is proud of its diminutive Labour support though neither man could be said to represent the voice of horny-handed moderation which NAFF dreams of recruiting from the Left.

Of the three men who run NAFF, Gouriet seems best to represent the embittered dreams and aspirations of the middle-class groundswell on which he floats. Despite the air of self-confidence he maintains on television (though, like the upper-class police Inspectors of pre-war B-movies, it has an austere, peremptory edge) what he really seems to relish is the loneliness of his role. He was an only child. His middle-class father was unemployed for 20 years after the war and scratched a living as a gardener rather than go on the dole. For a time the Gouriets lived in a caravan. A godparent paid for the boy to go to Charterhouse.

In Germany, as a national service gunner, he commanded a jeep and a crew of three on army exercises near the Russian border. Gouriet imagined the flash of enemy fire – 'and there I was, an 18-year-old right in the front of the whole army, the first person to be clobbered'. He relished physical discomfort and his own capacity to survive. He once planted six shots into the shoulder of a charging buffalo on Mount Kenya. Four years ago he impetuously packed in his military career as a staff officer at the Ministry of Defence because his superiors would not let him write a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*. A teenager had died of exposure on Ben Nevis and Gouriet wanted to condemn the 'argie-bargie' in favour of adventure training being stopped.

'We've become softer,' said Gouriet in his ice-cold country house, which he bought on army pay when prices were much lower. 'That's just it. If you make everyone dependent on the state, with everyone's snout in the public feeding trough, then 1984 has arrived. It's as simple as that.'

When Gouriet left the army he got a job as personal assistant to Walter Salomon, the eccentric chairman of the merchant bankers Rea Brothers. Gouriet is vague about how he got the job (it was on the old-boy recommendation of a general) but Salomon, who once conducted a highly-successful campaign against the customs duty he had to pay on a camera, appears to have given him his first taste for flamboyant barrack-room justice.

Some Labour MPs have raised questions about the support NAFF is drawing from industry today. Gouriet says they are not. He himself is palpably not wealthy, pining in deepest Hampshire for the army days in Somaliland when he could buy a good polo pony for £10. A visiting TV crew is requested to point its camera away from an oil painting on the wall. Gouriet peeks through the view-finder to make sure. Burglars, says Gouriet who haunts easily, might be watching.

Grunwick has been Gouriet's – and NAFFs' – finest hour. In a country of enormous and apparently insoluble problems, the energies of the Labour movement have been steered adroitly into the claustrophobic world of a back-street factory where the boss has displayed the bland scruples of a Victorian iron master. Like Thurber's scurrying crowds some of them may – especially after the LCJ's judgment in the High Court this week – sheepishly be wondering who it was who made them run and why. For in Columbus, Ohio, the dam was never a threat and, even had it broken, a level-headed citizenry could have kept its feet dry.

Roger Woddis

Club Talk

The new military regime in Pakistan under General Zia-ul-Haque has introduced the Islamic penalty of amputation of the hand for convicted thieves.

Good man, this General thingummy – Zia –
He seems to have the right idea;
Catch 'em thieving, lop off a hand –
It's the only language they understand.

Barbaric? Oh, that's tommy-rot,
A fellow can't be squeamish, what?
Dammit, they're under martial law –
Lucky they only lose a paw!

No good being soft as lard:
Twenty lashes and five years hard,
That's the way with agitators –
Where the hell are those bloody waiters?

No, I'm all for General what's-his-name,
Pity we can't do the same:
What we need is a show of force
By someone who can ride a horse,
Give orders, stand no nonsense – cheers!
Country's run by Reds and queers,
Parliament's just a talking-shop,
No respect for the riding-crop.

And amputation by the wrist's
Too good for thieving unionists.

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Corinna Adam

Protecting Our Lord

'I simply had to protect Our Lord,' Mrs Mary Whitehouse told me, in the Old Bailey coffee-bar, on the first day of the blasphemy trial. And indeed one of the more curious sights during an extraordinary legal week was that of Mrs Whitehouse and a small group of friends regularly huddled in silent prayer in the main concourses of the Central Criminal Court.

Whether or not in answer to prayer, or in response to the judge's summing-up, this time – with the majority verdicts of guilty against *Gay News* Ltd and its editor Denis Lemon – Mrs Whitehouse has won the first round. The Lord alone knows on what flank she will next find it necessary to protect Him. (The James Kirkup poem, describing homosexual acts between a Roman centurion and Christ after the crucifixion, entitled 'The Love That Dares To Speak Its Name', would be equally blasphemous, we were told, had it appeared in *The Times* or the NEW STATESMAN – which last printed a poem by Professor Kirkup a year ago.) Nor can anyone tell how other people will use the verdict for their private purposes.

For what has happened, in effect, is that the law of blasphemy has been redefined by Judge King-Hamilton – even though, in the long legal submissions during the case, he said he had no intention of making any new law. It is a law which most people would think outdated – the last prosecution was over 50 years ago – and discriminatory in that it applies only to Christianity and probably only to the Established Church. The metaphors were complementary: Mr John Mortimer QC, for the editor, spoke of 'blowing dust off old law books' to bring the case. Judge King-Hamilton riposted with the contrast between 'opening a window to let air into a stuffy Victorian room' and opening all the doors and windows and causing a draught 'with all its attendant dangers'. Metaphors everywhere. Mr Geoff Robertson, for *Gay News* Ltd, interpreted the poem as one man's symbolic view of how a particular group of outcasts – i.e., homosexuals – could approach Christianity and hope for salvation. (He did it so well that even Mrs Whitehouse admitted she was moved, and had to think hard to realise how wrong he was, and 'probably inspired by Gay Christians anyway'.) Mixed metaphors, too. When sentencing Mr Lemon, Judge King-Hamilton expressed his hope that, as a result of the case, the 'pendulum of public opinion would swing back towards a more healthy climate'.

It took two days, while the jury sat outside in sublime (or more likely puzzled and irritated) ignorance, for the defence to submit, first, that the offence of blasphemous libel had been subsumed by the Public Order Act of 1936 and the Obscene Publications Act of 1959. No, said the judge, it had not. The law was still on the books. Then could they bring expert evidence, theological or literary? No, on both counts. The judge said, with what seemed absolute certainty, that the issue was a very simple one. The poem spoke for itself. He did not relish the prospect of the jury being 'side-tracked' by disputatious theologians. One felt he was deliberately lining himself up on the side of the ordinary chap against trendy intellectuals. At one point, he kindly told the jury (five women, seven men, two of them black) the latest Test score. Cricket is listed among his recreations in *Who's Who* – but then, so is 'the theatre'.

However, where many lawyers feel Judge King-Hamilton has, after all, redefined the law, is on the question of intent; that there must be an *intention* to blaspheme. (Blasphemy, briefly, involves vilifying Christ and the Christian religion, and outraging believers in, or sympathisers with, the faith, in a manner tending to cause a breach of the peace.) In the old cases, intention was of the essence: in the case of *R.* v. *Gott* in 1921, the defendant had publicly proclaimed that he had been found 'three times guilty'. He wanted to shock, and he did cause a breach of the peace. Ladies in the street waved umbrellas at him and shouted 'disgusting, disgusting'. In this case, some misguided *Gay News* supporters, despite being asked not to do so by the defendants, had handed out leaflets in the street defaming Mrs Whitehouse. One of them wore a variety of dresses, and a number of crucifixes round his neck. He took a pint of beer off me in the local pub and I don't think even an eyebrow was raised in more than mild amusement.

Nevertheless, the world inside the Old Bailey is a closed and different world, and Judge King-Hamilton's ruling on what constituted a 'tendency to cause a breach of the peace' was precisely the same when the jury came back to ask for guidance on it as it had been in his summing-up. He relied largely on Mr Justice Avory's ruling in *R.* v. *Gott* – that it would be the 'instinct of any man worthy of the name to thrash a man or a woman' who sent him an abominable libel through the post. Gott sought his secular martydom, and was sentenced to nine months' hard labour, shortly after which he died. Lemon was refused permission to say that he had *not* intended to offend: his nine months' sentence is a suspended one, and he intends to fight it, if necessary, beyond the Appeal Court and the House of Lords 'to Europe'.

'Intent' will be one of the issues on which the defence will appeal, and so will the disputed question of a 'tendency to cause a breach of the peace'. Here the defence blame – if that is the right word – Mr Justice Wien's ruling in the case of *Goldsmith* v. *Private Eye* for criminal libel, when he excluded the breach of the peace clause as an essential element. Presumably the defence will also mention the latest Royal Commission on the Press, which recommends that private prosecutions against the press should be abolished in cases of blasphemous libel, as well as in those of seditious and criminal libel. (If anyone has forgotten, this prosecution was initiated privately by Mrs Whitehouse, and given Crown backing by Mr Justice Bristow last December. She is still called 'the Prosecutor'; *Gay News* and Denis Lemon have been ordered to pay *all* the prosecution costs.)

These are questions for the long term, for other rounds of the battle, for other seemingly endless discussions on the meaning and limits of freedom. It is clear enough where Mrs Whitehouse stands – and, indeed Judge King-Hamilton, who 'could not imagine . . . a more scurrilous profanity'. Most of us, I suppose – *Gay News* included – are a bit less sure of ourselves. One especially interesting feature of this case was how united the observers – and in particular the press – were against the prosecution, and in particular against Mr John Smyth's conduct of the case.

Of course the press benches are *parti pris* where the freedom of the press is in question. One of our heroes is Clarence Darrow; one of our texts the Scopes case, when he defended a teacher accused of corrupting children's minds with the Darwinian theory of evolution. This case, though, involved Christianity, homosexuality, and obscenity. It was a perfect trio for the prosecution, who could imply, though not state, that the defendants were not just blasphemers but filthy-minded deviants as well. But not one of us, from an extreme disbeliever to a devout Catholic, welcomed the verdict. As far as we were concerned, the prosecution had, at the least, deliberately introduced irrelevancies to discredit the character of the paper.

The chief of these, of course, was paedophilia. The gay movement is very divided on sexual love for children. Some feel they have enough troubles of their own; some are disgusted by it. Others, though, feel sympathy for paedophiles as comparable outcasts. It seems that *Gay News* prints articles by paedophiles because they cannot hope for a hearing elsewhere. It is a subject most people (like Margaret Drabble, giving character evidence for the paper) find distressing and distasteful. But Mr Smyth was given great leeway to reiterate the number of articles on the subject *Gay News* had published. Some impression, some nasty taste, must surely have been left.

Children are always brought into cases similar to this one – obscene publications cases, usually. In 1964 Mr Justice Stable ruled that we could not have the standards of what we read set by those of a 'well brought-up girl of 14'. But Mr King-Hamilton went back further, to the classic Lady Chatterley question, and asked Margaret Drabble whether her sons read *Gay News*. Her 16-year-old, she said, had read the poem. 'And the 12-year-old?' A charming smile. 'I'm afraid he never seems to read anything . . .'

Lost, I'm afraid, on the jury, who emerged looking as though they had been through a compulsory group therapy session and all of whom, unprecedentedly, turned up next day to hear the sentences. It must have been hard for anyone to hold out against Judge King-Hamilton's brief and very determined

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summing-up, his emphasis on the fact that it should not matter to them whether it was a bad law. (Which it is.) At one point, in the defence, it was said that it was perhaps blasphemous to think that Christ needed the legal protection Mrs Whitehouse sought to give him. And we heard, of course, the worthy chestnut from the judge to the jury: 'This is not a court of morals, this is a court of law.' This week, that excellent definition seemed totally inapt.

Peter Wilby

Doleful Youth

First, the plaudits. The Government has announced its almost unqualified acceptance of a scheme recommended by the Manpower Services Commission for easing youth unemployment. The scheme, proposed by a working party under Mr Geoffrey Holland, the Commission's head of planning, will be in full operation by September 1978 and will provide work experience or training for some 230,000 young people a year. The trainees must have spent at least six months on the dole (the Government's insistence on this qualifying period was its only point of departure from the Holland scheme) and will be paid a weekly allowance of £18. The total cost is £160m.

For once, then, the Government has acted speedily, decisively and with Keynesian rectitude. A patchwork quilt of opportunities for the young unemployed already existed, and this rationalisation and expansion was overdue. But amelioration of a social problem of appalling dimensions is no substitute for a policy. And the plain fact is that neither this Government, nor any other post-war government, has had a policy for the education and training of 16 to 19-year-olds. Does the Government want young people to stay on at school? If so, to what purpose? Does it want to encourage full-time technical college courses with a vocational slant? Does it prefer young workers to take part-time courses and employers to grant day release? Should courses for young school leavers concentrate on narrow industrial training or should there be a broader educational element? There is no official answer to any of these questions. The Emperor is not so much naked as invisible.

As a result of the Holland scheme, the grants system for post-16 education and training looks more tangled and absurd than ever. The continued existence of grants for full-time higher education suggests that the Government is anxious to ensure that there is no financial deterrent to youngsters entering universities or polytechnics. Yet the groups who are most likely to be deterred by family financial circumstances – students from working-class families and girls – drop out at 16, not 18. For their two years in the school sixth form, students can claim educational maintenance allowances. These are means-tested and awarded only at local education authority discretion. The maximum allowance is between £2 and £4 a week – less than half what could be earned on the dole and less than a quarter of the allowance for the new training schemes. Allowances for full-time courses in technical colleges are rarely better.

So the Holland scheme has several risks. First, it may perpetuate class divisions, with education being the preserve of those from better-off families, and training the option for the poor. Second, the new training allowance may encourage more young people to leave school early thus, on the one hand, swelling the pool of unemployed labour and, on the other, increasing the number of uneconomically small sixth form and technical college classes. Above all, the scheme diverted attention from one of the major educational scandals of the post-war era: the neglect of day release for teenagers at work. If employers were compelled (and assisted by subsidies) to release any 16 to 19-year-old for one day of further education a week, the pool of teenage jobs would be increased by around 15 per cent. Without an expansion of day release, the Holland scheme may just store up trouble for the future. The trainees may find jobs, only to reappear on the labour market at some future date with obsolescent skills.

Like many questionable Government decisions, the policy (or non-policy) for 16 to 19-year-olds is rooted in divisions between Whitehall departments. Industrial training is the responsibility of the Department of Employment, not the Department of Education and Science. And, while the Treasury can just about be persuaded to part with money for Employment, it currently looks upon the DES with about as much sympathy as a bank manager contemplating a bankrupt jobbing builder. That is why Shirley Williams lost a cabinet battle to get adequate maintenance allowances for sixth formers. It hardly helped that, as Education Secretary, she lacks the powers to ensure that local education authorities spend money on the purposes for which it is intended.

The simple solution is to have a single government agency covering post-compulsory education from the school sixth form through initial skill training to adult education. It should be responsible for providing education for every 16 to 19-year-old. The only question should be whether the sixth form, day release, training or further education course is most appropriate. And there should be a single system of allowances – not necessarily the same allowances, since the agency might decide that it wants to encourage one type of course or one type of institution against another – for the whole age group. Impossibly expensive? Hardly, when youth unemployment will soon reach such proportions that the majority of teenagers will be state pensioners of one sort or another, anyway. A coherent policy is a better investment than the piecemeal stopgap measures (of which the £168m. scheme is the latest example) that have dominated this area for so long.

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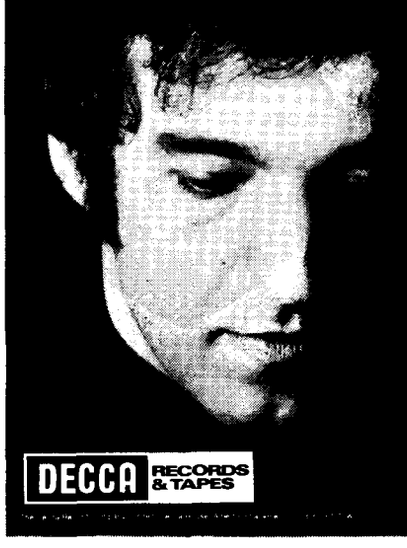

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Iain Guest

Building a Nation from the Bottom

Let's invent a new game, more constructive than diplomacy, more taxing than chess, and call it – for want of a better name – 'create a state'. For raw materials you've got a coastline (searing hot in summer), three frontiers, and a long spine of mountains. Situation? Somewhere in Arabia, on the Red Sea – so strategic. Population? Variable, but hovers around 5½ million. History? Murky: Islam took root in the 6th century, but apart from the Turks, who built some forts, that's it. No colonial hangover, so no elite with fancy ideas, and no irrelevant education system that needs overhauling. But you will have to consider a civil war that lasted eight years and ended in a bloody stalemate with 4 per cent of the population killed. How long ago? It finished about three years before the first American troops went to Vietnam. All set? Now, be warned – you've little else to go on. Your first budget was three years ago, the year of the first census. Before then it took eight days to travel the 250 kilometres between the capital and second city. What about a name? Yes, that is available. It's called the Yemen Arab Republic – North Yemen by some.

Having got this far you'll appreciate the challenge facing 37-year-old Lt-Colonel Ibrahim el Hamdi, who took power in North Yemen on 13 June 1974. Persist a moment longer and recall that the murderous civil war (and the 33 governments that followed before el Hamdi finally imposed some degree of stability) were prompted by the overthrow of the Imam Ahmad in 1962. Then you'll appreciate the legend on the wall outside Al Amin's bakery in Taiz, the second city of the Yemen. 'To see a picture before 1962,' it reads, 'visit the museum'.

The museum was Ahmad's palace, and here convincing efforts have been made to cast the old man's regime into the worst possible light. On display is his son's electrically-powered toy car – in contrast to Ahmad's refusal to allow his subjects electricity. In similar vein, hundreds of liquor bottles, perfume phials, and a movie projector (all prohibited). Finally – touch of Tiberius brooding alone among his perversions – the binoculars through which he watched his harem in the bath.

Ahmad's lions have survived him way up in his summer house above Taiz, which looks down over sweeping valleys and terraced fields like some fairy-tale Xanadu. The pity of it is that those same fields were tilled by peasants who made at most $50 a year. There were no paved roads, no railways, no modern schools, and no Yemeni doctors. North Yemen under the Imams was not a nice place to live.

Imam Ahmad's policy of self-imposed isolation, and the almost total lack of any centralised administration, mean that el Hamdi's Yemen probably comes as near as any country today to one that is being built from the bottom upwards. In a world of dismally few development models this is something to be taken note of. The opportunities it affords are considerable – not least to the United Nations, which is at last in on the planning instead of inheriting some unworkable daydreams (and in a country small enough for it to make an impact). The money for development is available in quantity from donors. And el Hamdi's government is creditably committed to creating a modern, efficient administration. The Yemen's significance lies in its newness just as much as its strategic position on the Red Sea, opposite squabbling Ethiopia and Somalia.

The major obstacle facing el Hamdi is a formidable regionalism, particularly in the North of the country where the dominant influence is exerted not by his government but by the area's semi-autonomous sheikhs. Although they formed the backbone of support for the Imam Ahmad's son and successor during the civil war, many sheikhs served on the Republican side. During the uncertain period, between 1970 and 1974, 90 of them served on a Consultative Assembly which allowed them to rubber-stamp decisions made by the Government.

The more confident el Hamdi grew of his position, the more he curbed the power of the sheikhs, until in October 1975 he abolished the Assembly. He next concentrated on consolidating his control over the army, at the same time pressing ahead with the physical development of his country – particularly roads. 'Government influence,' said one foreigner to me in Sanaa, 'extends as far as the asphalt.' It is no coincidence that in current plans for the next five years, a quarter of the proposed budget (not yet finalised, but probably about 16 billion rials or £2,000m.) is due to go on transport and communications. A major road is currently heading north to Saada, and another east to Mareb. Both are centres of the northern tribes and areas of discontent. No doubt aware that, with every kilometre of paved road their control diminishes, the sheikhs have engaged in a prolonged show of petulance over the last six months. Army convoys have been fired on, cars with government licence plates have been turned back, and a visit by Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi to Mareb in March was cancelled after a show of force by tribesmen.

El Hamdi wants an agreement with the recalcitrant sheikhs – of that there is no doubt. But he wants it on his terms. The evidence is that after a rocky period following the mysterious assassination of Abdullah al-Hajri (a close confidant of el Hamdi and go-between with the northern sheikhs) in London on Easter Sunday, the two sides have started talking in earnest about burying the hatchet and resuscitating the Assembly. But extracting details from the Sanaa rumour circuit is next to impossible.

With the spread of roads come services, and the precursor of local government in the form of about 140 local 'development associations', or government-supported co-operatives. But until such time as these take hold the sheikhs will remain supreme in the Yemen's 15,000 villages – the visible and intriguing apex of an old social order that is gradually giving ground. Of this Yemen the visitor catches but a brief and unsatisfying glimpse. On a typical day I took sheep and rice with one village dignitary, who played his transistor, took me for a spin in his new Toyota and then posed with a machine gun that he professed never to have used. That afternoon I engaged in humiliating attempts to snap veiled women who duck away from strangers, and mountain tribesmen who answer a smile with a frown and brusque withdrawal. All of this creates a powerful impression of xenophobia. But, personal feelings apart, here is a life of true agricultural endeavour: camels pulling home-made ploughs, women carrying heavy water jars, the timeless and relaxing spectacle of wheat being winnowed on mountain terraces. You might witness the sudden gusts of anger which result in regular cases of stabbing by ornamental *jambiehs* (daggers) in Hodeidah hospital on the Red Sea. But more likely you will be confronted by the vacant expression and bulging cheeks of weekend chewers of *ghat* (the local narcotic).

Over all this the sheikhs still exert formidable authority. No fewer than 40 per cent of all wells sunk by USAID, says one American official, turn out to be dry because sheikhs override the advice of hydrologists as to where they should be sunk. Throughout most of the country sheikhs still collect the tithe taxes, and own considerable amounts of land which they let to share-croppers for up to 50 per cent of the produce.

This system of land tenure led to famine and the overthrow of an empire in Ethiopia. There is little chance of that happening in the Yemen, because instead of absentee landlords it is families who are handing down land from generation to generation and working it themselves in fields adjacent to their share-cropping tenants. But still tribal barons must take responsibility for statistics which speak of dire subsistence poverty: infant mortality of 50 per cent, life expectancy for women of 40, growing vulnerability to the steely pressure of inflation on incomes of less than $400 a year.

El Hamdi's economic strategy is loosely described as offering an 'open door' to foreign investment. In practice this means

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that on emerging from the Imam's palace in Taiz one finds cubbyhole stores offering 'Double Happiness' gym shoes from China, eggs from the West Indies, cheese from Holland, and strawberry jam from Bulgaria. The contrast is meant to be exhilarating. Surprisingly enough, it is. This economic climate encourages enterprise of every shape and form. A Chinese doctor on a bilateral aid programme does acupuncture in his spare time. One of a group of Yemenis driven from Vietnam opens the 'Green Hills of Yemen' cafeteria outside the mountain city of Ibb, and business is roaring within a month. Denmark finds a willing buyer for second-hand newsprint. The Polyglot language school latches on to the hesitant Arabic of foreign aid workers. Then there are the traders, stocking their shops until the shelves are as international as the United Nations.

No Saudi Satellite

The Yemen's ambitious development plans, too, depend upon enterprise. This is how the operation works. The Yemen is currently embarking on the second year of its first five-year plan. Each sector of the economy has its own plan which brings the Government, aid donors, and the UN's 114 foreign experts and 48 volunteers together. Thus in health, the Yemen Ministry of Health and the UN's World Health Organisation decided late last year that priorities would be eight in number, including the improvement of hospitals, an ambitious scheme for rural health centres, and several specific programmes to combat malaria and tuberculosis. Donors then came up with the money for projects that appealed to them, and most plumped for hospitals. Sweden, China, Kuwait and Iraq have all built, or are planning to build, clinics or hospitals in the cities.

Similarly, the lion's share of money for communications is coming in the form of bilateral aid programmes. China is constructing the road from Sanaa to Saada, Sweden the road to Mareb, and France the road to the southern border with Marxist Aden. West Germany, the USSR and China have all contributed to the triangle of roads which link Sanaa to Taiz and the Red Sea port of Hodeidah. Iraq has tentatively promised $15m. for the rebuilding of Hodeidah airport. West Germany obliged with a new airport for Sanaa. As for the UN, the World Food Programme pays a part of labourers' wages in food, while UN volunteers (most of whom themselves come from developing countries) help to survey branch roads, and also maintain electronic equipment at the airports.

So the list goes on through agriculture, education, industry and townplanning. One fact emerges clearly: without foreign assistance, the bubble would burst quickly and painfully. The Yemen has nowhere enough money to balance the regular budget, let alone finance ambitious development plans. Imports exceed exports by a rate of over 15 to 1. The country makes only $12m. from trade, and a minuscule $800,000 from direct taxes.

So where, you might ask, does the money come from? The answer is from remittances sent home by migrant workers. Well over a million are working abroad, mainly in Saudi Arabia where they earn up to $100 a day as labourers and construction workers. In 1974 this provided almost 900m. rials ($180m.). Today it is put at anything between $500 and $1,000m. a year. No one really knows, because most of it evades the authorities and ends up under a mattress in remote villages. So the regular budget still has to be balanced, and the deficit of $85m. last year was made good by Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia thus has formidable purchase direct and indirect on the Yemen's purse-strings. But it would be a mistake to see the Yemen as a mere Saudi satellite. The real problems caused by the proximity of Saudi Arabia are accidentally economic rather than deliberately political, and stem from her appetite for manual labour. The volume of imports, made possible by remittances sent home to the Yemen by the migrant workers, creates an impression of wealth which hardly squares with the Yemen's classification as one of the world's poorest 25 nations. The wealth exists, and it has certainly permeated peasant families far more effectively than any government measures aimed at redistributing wealth, given the social obstacles. But it has also meant that the economy has developed gout when barely out of the cradle. Land speculation and rent inflation in the cities are rampant as landlords cash in on the anticipated influx of diplomats and contractors. When tomatoes cost 14 times what they do in nearby Sudan, something must be wrong, and indeed inflation threatens to make life intolerable for those families who do not have relatives abroad, or who are not producing food.

Intolerable Tension?

It is this most modern of afflictions which suggests that the Yemen's development may be, in fact, running slightly askew. Perhaps el Hamdi, while winning the battle with the sheikhs, is losing the war with his own economy? Is it all happening so fast that the abrupt imposition of new on old is creating an intolerable tension? Inevitably, the contact between the two dissolves into vignettes, hearsay, and small titbits of information. Across the border in Aden, we are told, women are playing a leading role in the country's development. In North Yemen no such luck. A women's advancement society was formed in the early 1970s, and then disbanded after a public rally, at which women who took off their veils were stoned. Still only 3 per cent of all girls are enrolled in government primary schools and out of 95 trainee nurses at the Health Manpower Institute in Sanaa only seven are women.

Less ominously, smuggling continues unabated, and will do so until a proper customs authority is created. Into Mokha on the Red Sea comes whisky from Djibouti, to be sold at the roadside; and into the desert town of Mareb come cars from Saudi Arabia, avoiding the import duties of 60 per cent on private cars.

Access to government ministers is direct and easy, in best tribal traditions. There is almost no delegation of authority – no vetting of phone calls, no thicket of secretaries in luxurious antechambers. Instead, a cold corridor and an old watchman cradling a gun in his lap. The informality is refreshing, the lack of pretension more so. But this is hardly the way to oil the wheels of an administration, and foreigners talk of interminable delays in getting ministerial signatures in triplicate.

Village Loyalties

Then there are the *real* problems. The sheer volume of traffic is swamping roads, airports and harbours. Today 220,000 passengers are landing at Sanaa airport each year, as against the prediction of 30,000 by 1985. Yet a modern, trained civil aviation service is not created overnight. Applicant trainees in electronics and air traffic control are so few that almost everyone with primary education who applies is accepted for the government's two-year training course. Spare parts for the highly sophisticated Siemens beaming equipment at Sanaa take months to arrive from Germany, leaving two Nepalese UN volunteers to cannibalise as best they can. The German-built road between Sanaa and Taiz is showing signs of strain because it was built for five-ton, not ten-ton trucks. Cars are becoming available faster than people are learning to drive them, to judge from the succession of wrecks beside the roads.

Most serious of all is the shortage of manpower. Farms are dangerously undermanned, and food self-sufficiency quite unlikely as long as farmers see opportunities and easy money across the border in Saudi Arabia. There is no incentive to produce for export – indeed Yemeni coffee (it originated in the Red Sea port of Mokha) costs over twice the price of imported Ethiopian coffee. Almost 400 schools built by villages from their own funds, according to the Minister of Education, have recently had to close because of a lack of trained teachers. At the main hospital in Sanaa, patients have to be attended by their own relatives after 1 p.m. because of a lack of trained nurses.

And yet the Yemen has still been spared some of the more traumatic aspects of development. The main cities are remarkable for their lack of slums, and Sanaa is expected to grow to a mere 350,000 by 1985. The rate of migration to cities is, in fact, proceeding at snail's pace and that points to the persistence of village loyalties. Remarkably, educated Yemenis still appear to prefer their own villages to the dust and traffic of Sanaa. The Yemen will only become a true model for development when the irresistible force of el Hamdi's centralism meets the immovable object of regionalism – and equilibrium results. Until then development can only be erratic and uneven, despite the Government's best intentions.

Finally, the process can only benefit from that most important of all assets – the Yemenis themselves. Proud, acquisitive, shrewd and rudely intolerant of humbug: a true mountain folk. Anyone who frowns into a camera must eventually come out on top.

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Frank Longford

Myra Hindley and Parole

On Wednesday last week I took part in a 50-minute television debate on BBC-2 regarding Myra Hindley and parole. I am not concerned now with the programme itself but with the issue of parole for Myra Hindley and other life prisoners. I have visited her at intervals of three months for over eight years. Until recently I saw her in Holloway but since February in the women's wing of Durham Prison – the 'living tomb' as it was called when it was constructed as a maximum security fortress for the most dangerous men in prison. It was considered too inhumane for men but has since been re-established for women. I satisfied myself long ago not only by direct contact but by many inquiries that whatever part (I will come back to that later) Myra Hindley played all those years ago she was no more likely to commit murder if released than I was. I assumed, however, that there would be little hope of parole until she had served about ten years. It will be 12 years in October since she was arrested.

This brings me to the crucial distinction between being 'considered' for parole and actually getting it. Some weeks ago Lord Gardiner, ex-Lord Chancellor, Lord Carr ex-Home Secretary, Lord Hunt ex-chairman of the Parole Board and I went on a deputation to the Home Secretary (we are still awaiting his reply). We argued that after ten years at the outside all prisoners should be automatically 'considered' for parole. It is a far cry from being 'considered' to actually leaving prison. There are a number of hurdles to cross; the local Review Board, the Central Parole Board, the Home Secretary plus consultation probably with at least two judges. And when parole is awarded it may not operate at once. But when 'consideration' is permitted, the prisoner is at least allowed, so to speak, to 'enter the course'.

He or she is at least allowed to put his or her case to someone concerned, at however low a level, with the ultimate decision. He or she is at least allowed a vestige of hope and some sense that he or she is still regarded as a human being with some access to human justice (I am talking of life prisoners – prisoners serving determinate sentences are automatically considered for parole after serving a third of their sentence).

When I last inquired officially I was told that only three prisoners (two of whom would be Ian Brady and Myra Hindley) had served more than ten years and not been considered for parole. Today I believe that there are half-a-dozen; on present procedures the number seems likely to increase. In my last postbag I received a letter from a clergyman whom I do not know and who, incidentally, mentions that he disagrees with most of what I say about pornography. He puts the point very clearly:

> I don't know Miss Hindley, so, in her particular case, I have no opinion as to whether she should be released from prison. I find it very hard, though, to understand how our society can lay any claim to be civilised if it denies her – or any other inmate who has been inside for more than ten years – the right to be considered for parole.

Our first and minimum demand must be, therefore, that Myra Hindley, like all other prisoners in her situation, should forthwith be 'considered' for parole (Ian Brady does not wish to be considered for parole in the foreseeable future). In a civilised penal system our discussion would take on a different character. But, taking our system more or less as it is, I concede that, while all life prisoners should be 'considered' for parole after ten years at the outside, they should not all get it at that time, though the great majority should. The decision as to who did and who didn't get it would clearly have to rest with the parole authorities, however constituted. The general public are entitled to be consulted about the principles of penal policy but on no account should they have any say in decisions affecting the parole of individual prisoners of whom, in the nature of things, they can know nothing whatever. To say otherwise is to introduce mob rule or indeed lynch law.

What is Myra Hindley like today? I could quote many favourable verdicts including that of my wife who visited her for the first time last December and took to her at once. When asked to find a single word to describe her she called her 'sensitive'. Mrs Wing, governor of Holloway for seven years, said of her: 'Myra is no criminal.' She did not, of course, mean that she had not committed a crime or that she had not rightly been sent to prison. She meant that she was not a criminal type or in any way likely, if released, to revert to crime. Perhaps the following passage from a retired social worker at Holloway is as good an opinion as can be offered.

> I know Myra extremely well . . . and have seen her regularly throughout the years. I share your view of her personality and character and your confidence that she would never commit, or become involved in, any further capital crime. I do not underestimate the effect of spending so many of her formative years in prison and the influence that has had upon her character. Nevertheless she is sensitive and responsive, and in a different environment and with the chance to experience a wider circle of relationships I am quite sure she would adapt and achieve normality.

No words of mine could equal the authority of that testimonial. It should count a good deal more than anonymous sources which are occasionally made use of, as in last Sunday's *Observer*, to produce an opposite impression.

But if Myra Hindley is so nice and attractive today, how is it possible that she could be the same person as the monster of the Moors' of public imagination? The less responsible elements of the press have much to answer for but even the worst elements in the press did not commit the Moors murders and I repeated yet again on television that no words could be found bad enough for those atrocities. Myra Hindley has said from the beginning and never varied in her statements that she was not present when any child was killed and that she was never guilty of murder; but she has to live with the knowledge that in her own words she behaved in a 'cruel' and 'criminal' way to a helpless little girl.

She acknowledged again in a message to the programme last week that she deserved a severe prison sentence and no one will deny that 12 years in prison merits that description. I accept her statement of her guilt and of its limits, but it not part of my case to base myself on what she did or did not do 12 and more years ago under the dominating influence of Ian Brady. On impersonal principles of justice, she should be considered for parole without any further delay.

But I go further. The Parole Board have their faults. But they are intelligent people and fair minded. If they would really go into the merits of the case of Myra Hindley without being frightened of irrational reactions, they will grant her parole on her first application. But will the Home Secretary (for whom I have plenty of respect after his work in Northern Ireland) have the courage to do the right thing in the face of the potential outcry? Certain newspapers on their track record must be expected to do their worst and a very bad worst it has proved on occasion.

My postbag is naturally heavy after the television debate. It is much more balanced than previously on this subject. My correspondents fall into three roughly equal groups; the congratulatory, the hostile and those seeking help. A high proportion of the hostile letters are and have always been represented by the following quotation: 'In your life you have done much more harm than good – you are a thoroughly selfish, stupid, foul old man. Stick to your dirty books.' And I have had worse ones than that. The only intelligent ones that give me any anxiety are those which relate to her future when she is paroled. There is no easy answer there, though there will be no difficulty about her getting employment. But no one will surely suggest that she ought to be retained permanently in 'protective custody' against her own heartfelt wishes.

The great obstacle to penal reform lies in the persistent fear of our rulers that it is unpopular, a vote loser with the general public. I myself believe that the general public would be fair enough if they were ever provided with enough serious information, and assisted by well-informed discussions to bring their minds to bear. The strange confrontation on television last week will be fully justified if, as I hope and believe, it has at last begun that process. It took a dedicated minority to get rid of the monstrous iniquity of hanging. So it may well be with the whole idea of remorseless vengeance towards those who have been involved in terrible crimes.

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John Shirley*

Post-Mark

The most recent event of real significance inside the Metropolitan Police was not the jailing last week for corruption of ex-Commander Kenneth Drury, once head of the famous Flying Squad. It was the modestly-reported transfer two weeks earlier of Gilbert Kelland to the important position of Assistant Commissioner (Crime).

To some extent, this management manoeuvre was an acknowledgement of the success of Kelland's anti-corruption team in the recent spate of trials (his men gathered the evidence that has put 13 detectives from Obscene Publications and the Sweeney into prison). But, more importantly, the appointment was the work of the new Commissioner, David McNee, and it represented McNee's intention to extend and consolidate the anti-corruption drive initiated by his predecessor, Sir Robert Mark. The new approach may lack Mark's delicacy of touch – but its blunt directness may, in the longer term, be even more effective.

It would be churlish to deny the importance of Mark's role in reshaping both the structure and the ethos of the Met. After all, he was responsible for the interchangeability system, the establishment of uniformed control, and the creation of the A-10 Branch. A lesser man might well have been intimidated by the formidable opposition that welled up within the London CID against these reforms.

But the climate of the times was always on Mark's side. His original selection for the Met., way back in 1966, had been influenced by Home Secretary Roy Jenkins's concern about police malpractice. By the time he took over as Commissioner, in April 1972, the evidence of corruption was everywhere to be seen – gathered, as it had been, by such strange bedfellows as *The Times*, the *Sunday People*, Lord Longford's Pornography Inquiry, some sturdy mandarins in the Home Office, and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (Crime) Frank Williamson, who remains – five years after his premature resignation – the unsung hero of this whole affair.

In the wider world beyond Whitehall, the prevailing mood was conducive to reform as well. Although the years of 'swinging London' were the times when corrupt policemen took the lion's share of their bribery in Soho (sums estimated at £100,000 a year in court) they witnessed, too, a growing openness in British society, which, together with the death-throes of the notion of the British establishment's right to rule, made a serious questioning of police practice possible. By 1972 the old rationale of (then) Assistant Commissioner Peter Brodie – that his men were 'officers' and therefore incorruptible (the same preposterous view that once protected Philby) – had simply lost all credibility.

Mark benefited gloriously from the irreverence that these trends bred. He will, quite rightly, be remembered as the man who changed the moral climate of the Yard and made integrity fashionable again. But even he was not above a little ambiguity in style: in 1973, he argued publicly that corruption could not be widespread in the Met. because the paltry penalties imposed for selling dirty books made it simpler for pornographers to pay the fines than risk bribing policemen; yet, simultaneously, he had ordered Gilbert Kelland to set off the vast pornography investigation that reached its climax last week at the Old Bailey.

A few months later Mark gave an interview to a courageous woman detective constable, Joan Angell, who had pursued a single-handed campaign against police malpractice in the handling of the big Wembley Bank Robbery of August 1972. She named a number of the most senior detectives in London, who were, in her eyes, implicated. Mark promised action, but did nothing. It was Joan Angell (like Frank Williamson before her) who resigned from the police force in despair.

The unpalatable truth remains that corruption inside the Metropolitan Police did not cease the day that Mark took over. Even now, there are a number of inquiries going on involving allegations against detectives from the Drug Squad, the Robbery Squad, the Serious Crimes Squad, the Regional Crime Squad, and the Yard's own Criminal Intelligence Department. And while it is still true (as crime reporters are so fond of emphasising) that most of the complaints relate to pre-Mark days two points stand out: first, some of the irregularities certainly occurred after the golden day of Mark's takeover; secondly, even in the cases where this is not so, the investigations implicate detectives who were promoted under Mark's regime.

This is the inheritance that McNee and Kelland now have to face. It is familiar to them both: to Kelland from his Soho work; to McNee from frequent visits to the capital before his new position took effect. Indeed, as early as last autumn, when allegations of malpractice were made against Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Reg Davis, and Detective Chief Superintendent John Bland, McNee was called in from his office in Strathclyde to a special Home Office conference with Merlyn Rees. As a northern chief constable, he technically had no business being there, but since the complaints directly implicated officers more senior even than those who have now been jailed, it was thought appropriate to ask him down.

The inquiry itself, handled by Chief Constable of Kent, Barry Pain, has so far resulted in the resignation of one officer, and the suspension of another. The matter is not yet finished.

When it is, it seems likely to be dealt with in a manner that befits McNee's Scottish nickname of 'The Hammer.' Already Kelland's actions, as his right-hand man, have exhibited the style we can expect to see. A few days after taking on the post of ACC, Kelland called in one senior detective – a man linked several times in public with the Soho villains Bernie Silver and James Humphreys. Kelland made it clear he had for some time disapproved of the officer's socialising habits, it would be appropriate if he took an immediate transfer into uniform (the officer has decided to retire as gracefully as possible, his CID rank, publicly at least, intact). Since that exchange, the McNee/Kelland axis has turned its attention to the possibility of breaking-up some of the Yard's remaining specialist squads including, it is rumoured the once-famous Flying Squad.

If that disbandment were ultimately to happen, it would, within circles of police morale, be as cataclysmic an event as the trials we have already seen. It will take a generation, even now, for the Met. to live down the convictions of the last few months. Yet the pursuit of corruption must continue, and a heavy hammer is needed for the job.

John Shirley is a co-author, with Barry Cox and Martin Short, of The Fall of Scotland Yard, *to be published as a Penguin Special next month.*

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London Diary

☐ Up at Grunwick's on Monday morning, it was rough at times but not so ferocious as I half-expected. Preferring to be well protected, I took up a position among the Derbyshire miners. The contests were reminiscent of scrum battles in rugger, a game which I hated when forced to play it at school, but at which I'd back miners (especially Welsh) against police any day. The police link arms, the pickets link arms, and both sides push. At 7.45 the police line was broken. Two coppers, making an arrest, found themselves isolated and a rescue was nearly achieved, but reinforcements came racing up. Then we were pushed back toward the main road, Dudden Hill Lane. By 8.15 the road belonged to the crowd – something more often seen in Paris than in London, for the police try hard not to concede it – and traffic was diverted. A new activity suggested itself: banging with banner-poles on a closed police van, believed to contain members of the detested Special Patrol Group. Police efforts, eventually successful, to get the van clear caused another engagement. A captured helmet was tossed triumphantly from hand to hand; nobody seemed particularly angry.

☐ It's high time, I felt as I came away, to inter the word 'Rentacrowd'. I saw a great many determined trade unionists, very few unattached individuals – except a lawyer who conducted a kerbside seminar on the High Court case – and no one who wasn't drawn there by strong feelings about the precise issue at stake. It's pointless to draw distinctions between those who get involved in violence and those who don't. The clashes arise from a conflict between the determination to block the approach to the factory, which was universal, and the strategy of the police. I admit that I couldn't be everywhere at the same time, but the men I saw struggling with policemen were miners, dockers, and London taxi-drivers. According to Merlyn Rees, they aren't supporters of democratic government. How does he know? I bet I've talked to more of them than he has. I'll leave the last word to an engineer from Glasgow, who remarked during a lull in the action: 'If the Government was on the workers' side there'd be no need for all this.'

☐ I find it hard to make up my mind about the sexual passages in Tom Driberg's autobiography (of course, as A. J. P. Taylor stressed in his review, they're far from being the whole of the book). I can see that a description of homosexual activity, written without shame or hypocrisy, is a breakthrough. What bothers me is that the men who were Driberg's one-night stands are treated simply as sex objects. In fact, the tone recalls that of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*, which was joyfully hailed by the enlightened 40 years ago but is now anathema to liberated women. At one time it was the fashion for intellectuals, such as H. G. Wells, to boast about their pick-ups. (Wells's biographer, Norman MacKenzie, reckons that he had about 300 women altogether, and I wonder whether Driberg matched this score, *mutatis mutandis*.) But nowadays scalp-hunting, and stories about scalp-hunting are regarded as distinctly unpleasing. Is it possible to be a male chauvinist in relation to other males? I should say yes; a chauvinist in the original political sense is a chauvinist in relation to other nations, perhaps similar to his own. Tom would have relished the semantic point.

☐ I winced when I read that the National Gallery has been forced to pay £715,000 (including buyer's premium, whatever that is) for that painting by Il Parmiçianino. These prices are an international racket, like fees to opera singers; the trouble is that either Britain is in the game or we're not. The National Gallery beat the Louvre, anyway, which ought to delight Peter Shore and Tony Benn while infuriating Giscard d'Estaing. As for the artist, he ought to be given the definite article because the name is a sobriquet, like El Greco. True, Parmigiani is a surname – as in the case of the superb delicatessen in Old Compton Street – but the painter's surname was Mazzuoli and his appellation means 'the little man from Parma'. His output was fairly small; he died at the age of 36 and, years before that, had shown a tendency to devote his time to alchemy rather than painting. Indeed, he was thrown into prison by a cultured but impatient Duke for not meeting the deadline on a commission. It's just as well that the Arts Council has no such powers.

☐ Very different is the life-story of Marc Chagall, who was 90 last week. Whatever view you take of his status as an artist, it's safe to say that no painter in our time has given more pleasure – possibly more than Kronenbourg beer, Jane Birkin and James Fenton's column rolled into one. The longevity and sustained productivity of painters is a mysterious matter, like the precocity of composers. Perhaps, as in the case of orchestral conductors, the regular physical activity has something to do with it. A magnificent exhibition could be mounted of paintings done when the artist was over 80 – all the way from Titian through Renoir to Picasso, Matisse and Utrillo – whereas an anthology of 80-plus literature wouldn't match up to it. Chagall's output must be enormous. I was once lent a holiday house belonging to a relative of his; there were Chagalls in the bedrooms and even on the stairs. I was terrified, and double-locked the doors every time I went for a walk. You can bet I'm not saying where the house is.

☐ The Likud victory in the Israeli election was widely interpreted as a revolt by Sephardic Jews against the Ashkenazi domination which they associated with the Labour Party. However, only six of the 43 Likud members of the Knesset are Sephardim. Roughly, the electorate is 45 per cent Sephardic, 40 per cent Ashkenazi and 15 per cent Arab. The new Knesset has 21 Sephardic, 92 Ashkenazi and seven Arab members, and that shows what the national party-list system leads to. Meanwhile, an Irish friend tells me with concern that the new Dail has only one Protestant member – the lowest minority representation in the Republic's history. All is not lost, however. The new Lord Mayor of Cork is a Jew.

☐ The Queen and the Duke seemed to have been rather confused last week by being told that they were going on a tour of north London and finding that their first stop was Space House, Kingsway, which is north only in the sense that it isn't south. Here they met the mayor of Camden, whose straggling domain includes the former (tiny) borough of Holborn. A royal halt in Holborn could have been made at any number of interesting places – such as the British Museum, the Central School of Art, or the NS office – so the planners boobed badly in selecting Space House, whose only claim to fame was the time it was left empty by Harry (Centrepoint) Hyams. The Queen asked the mayor, so he says, 'about the location of Camden in relation to the other London boroughs'. Probably she thinks in terms of traditional neighbourhoods; her grandfather used to get some fun out of insisting that he lived in Pimlico. As for the Duke, he asked whether Space House was Camden Town Hall. I suppose he was looking for the red flag.

☐ Cricket on television is one thing, but cricket on radio gives you Fred Trueman's salty comments. On Monday, spotting David Sheppard in the crowd, he remarked in a commiserating tone that if the Bishop of Liverpool had stayed in cricket he might be captaining England by now. Well, it's all a question of values. Stalin's mother is credited with saying that if her son hadn't taken up politics he could have been a bishop.

Mervyn Jones

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The full cost of the Government-subsidised school dinner is about 49p, made up of 16p for food and 33p for administration. – *Daily Telegraph* (Brenda Rowe)

☐ There are still a few vacancies for resident or day places at the Summer Training Conference at the University College of Swansea from 29 July to 1 August. There is a particularly good programme with outstanding speakers and this will more than compensate for the fact that bedrooms do not have washbasins. – *The Magistrate* (Mrs R. Silkin)

☐ Lord Segal said that phasing out of pay-beds had done nothing to shorten the waiting-lists. At some hospitals the waiting-lists for abortions were more than nine months. – *The Times* (Reginald Stacey)

☐ Lord Longford has suggested that only he and a few others have the sense to know whether violent prisoners should be allowed parole. But how can I take seriously the judgment of a man who sits through a TV programme wearing brown socks and a blue shirt? – *Daily Express* (Steve Sandley)

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Denis MacShane

Picked Up on the Picket Line

In the past month I have been arrested twice by the police. The first time was at the back entrance to Mr George Ward's Grunwick factory by Dollis Hill tube station. The second was 250 miles further north outside Lord Gibson's *Northern Echo* building in Darlington where 108 members of my union, the NUJ, are on strike.

Three weeks ago a report on Grunwick in the *Sunday Times* claimed that it was currently fashionable to get oneself arrested on a picket line. It may be for some, not for me. I hated being arrested. Whoever typed out those fatuous words had clearly never heard the extraordinary depressing and lonely sound of a cell door clanging shut behind him. Yes, the door really does clang, a heavy metal bong as a hundredweight of steel slams into its frame. And the jailers still carry their long cell keys on big rings of metal just like in the John Wayne pictures. But the cells, at least at Wembley and Darlington police stations, don't have bars on the windows. They don't have windows at all. Just four inch square slabs of reinforced opaque glass like the ones you walk over on streets. They let in some light but a glimpse of sky would have been welcome.

Nor could the man who wrote that 'Insight' report in the *Sunday Times* have experienced the smell from the open lavatory inside the cell. The second time around, in Darlington, I quickly adjusted to it, but there is no pleasure, and less fashion, in the smell of a badly run public lavatory. Nor either in the messy indignity of being finger-printed. I had thought – and again how the cinema and TV is responsible for all ideas of police procedures – it was simply a matter of a dainty dab of thumb and first finger on an ink pad and then on to paper. Not so. Every finger, even the pinky, is carefully rolled in ink and then held firmly down on to a printed form. Finally the palms are covered in ink and an imprint taken (I wonder if there are amateur palm readers in the police who are let loose on all those palm prints – 'I see a tall dark stranger who will take you away'). Your hands end up covered in glutinous black ink. 'You journalists ought to be used to it,' quipped the finger-print man in Darlington. 'After all, it's the same as printer's ink.'

The awful thing is that until those two arrests, although I've been too close as a reporter to the police in action to swallow the 'aren't they all wonderful' line, I have always kept firmly within the law. My only previous brush with criminality was a speeding conviction six years ago, and that for doing 37 m.p.h. in a Fiat 500. Princess Anne probably goes faster on horseback.

The sergeant who arrested me at Grunwick was quite adamant that I had destroyed my career. 'Fucking rabble. That's all you are. Fucking rabble,' he kept repeating as we entered the green police coach designated for arrestees. I couldn't work out a riposte as the arm-lock he had effected around my neck in the 40 yards between picket line scrum and the police coach had left me quite breathless.

'Fucking rabble,' he said again as he pushed me into a seat and sat down heavily beside me. 'You probably don't know it but having this on your record will ruin you, you little cunt.' It was only as I recovered my breath that I realised my right foot was hurting considerably. Trying to move it I found out why. A large police boot was placed firmly on it.

'Excuse me, sergeant. You're on my foot. Could I have it back.'

'Am I?' he said, looking down.

'Oh dear. So I am.' He lifted his boot and slammed it down again on my foot. 'What a pity.'

This particular exercise was interrupted when a young man, a complete stranger, knocked on the side of the bus window and asked if I was all right. I gave him a name to contact when my sergeant leant across me and snapped the window shut. That wasn't enough however and as the man kept talking to me the sergeant leapt out of the bus.

'Right, cunt. You're coming inside.'

'What for?' said the stranger.

'Obstructing the police,' said the sergeant, as he hustled my would-be samaritan into the coach. As peace settled I took out a pen to click into action when he snatched it from me.

'Give me that back,' I said, perhaps a shade peremptorily given my circumstances.

'No way, cunt,' he said. 'This is now one pen, prisoner's property.'

'Come on, I'm only going to write with it.'

He looked at the pen, a pricey Parker ball-point and as I made a half-hearted reach for it held it between his hands and snapped it in half.

'Oh dear. One broken pen, prisoner's property.'

At Wembley police station he led me off the coach with a peculiarly painful rigid arm lock. It wasn't his local nick and someone had to point the way to the charge room. The way there was down a sloping corridor. 'You're fucking lucky there aren't any stairs to fall down, aren't you?' Perhaps I was. I hope he was kidding, though.

In Darlington the police hardly swore at all. The nearest thing to an oath was a muttered 'Anarchy, anarchy' from a sad-faced Inspector watching the parade of local reporters and sub-editors being charged. Some 40 odd people have been arrested on the Darlington picket line, not as impressive a total as the Grunwick arrests but given the relative size of the picket line – the Darlington journalists have been lucky to get more than 70 pickets for their mass turn-out – the Durham Constabulary must feel that they have done much better, proportionately, than their brothers in the Met.

The inside of the cell was as miserable as at Wembley. My first companion was even more depressed than I was. He was a local court reporter and knew all the police by their first names. What was worse, his girl-friend, to whom he was engaged, was a policewoman; and he worried over her career prospects. The next one in was one of Darlington's most respected journalists and clearly in full possession of that ratlike cunning that Nick Tomalin once wrote was an essential quality for successful reporters. As the cell door shut he reached into his socks – shoes, belts and ties had to be left outside and pulled out cigarettes and matches. He had heard from pickets arrested the previous week that the police wouldn't let you have a smoke – so in the ride from the *Northern Echo* to the police station he had carefully transferred cigarettes and matches to inside his socks.

It was a small victory in a rotten night. The cell was then livened up by a drunk picked up for fighting outside a kebab house. He was markedly scornful of the sheepish, shame-faced journalists confronting him and regaled us with tales of times past spent inside a police cell. He also explained what the initials ACAB scrawled everywhere on the cell walls stood for.

'All coppers are bastards,' he told us as he lurched to the cell door to shout more abuse at a policeman passing down the corridor.

read, to make out: to interpret: to expound: to make known: to learn from written or printed matter:

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Tweet Tweet

We all have, I feel sure, a favourite line, good or bad as the case may be, culled from our rich and lavishly varied heritage of English Literature, in which I include, as will be seen, all literature written in English. Regular readers, geared to expect from me nothing but valuable profundities and that serious and sensible approach to life that marks the thinking and 'deeply committed' man, will find me for once in frivolous vein for my own favourite line comes from the treasured *oeuvres* of an American, none other than Ella Wheeler Wilcox. It is a line of verse from a poem which I once knew by heart, and it is, indeed, on my memory that I must now rely as I am currently away from home and there isn't, alas, always room in one's hand-luggage for the complete works of Miss Wheeler Wilcox, though of course I pop them in when space allows.

The narrator of this particular poem is a husband who, after the dinner part of what is clearly being a successful dinner party and while his wife (described as being 'stately', not a very *troublant* adjective) and 'the tenor, McKee' are entertaining the guests in the drawing-room with a 'blithe duet', lights up a fag and, in its fragrant smoke clouds, lets his thoughts wander back to his harum-scarum bachelor days abroad and to the flashing eyes and friendly ways of a dusky female charmer encountered in, if I've remembered correctly, somewhere that sounds suspiciously like Port Said. What actually went on between them? Ah, if only we knew! Despite being the authoress of *Poems of Passion* (1883), our poetess is never one for full frontal information, though she does refer to the episode having occurred during 'days when life was a gay masked ball, and to love and be loved was the sum of it all'. An amorous coupling seems, on the available evidence, a near probability. The recollection is, anyhow, a bitter-sweet one, emotions are stirred, a nostalgic longing for dear, dead moments of the past sweeps over the narrator and he starts quietly to blub. His stately wife spots the tears, stops singing (one can almost hear the guests' sighs of relief) and comes sympathetically over to ask her husband what the matter is. Her choice of words for this solicitous inquiry is *'Qu'avez-vous,* dearest, your lids are wet?' It is the combination of the frog phrasette and the word 'lids' that gets me.

The wife's Christian name is, incidentally, Maud, an unusual one at the present time but by no means the only Maud to grace poetical pages and provide a real cornucopia of handy rhymes ('bored', 'snored', 'gnawed', 'fraud', not that Tennyson goes in for any of them, making do splendidly without. His poem, 'Maud', contains a real conundrum, or rather a brace of conundra over which poetry buffs may be able to help me. No room here for outlining the poem's plot, such as it is. To work! The trouble begins with the poet's almost unbridled enthusiasm for Maud. Sixteen years old precisely (a bit ancient for those child-worshipping Victorians but doubtless they made do with the material available), and socially okay, she is a 'milk-white faun' and 'the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall'. She is, furthermore and unfortunately, 'the moon-faced darling of all'. Be that as it may, Miss Moon Face falls, happily, for the humbly born poet and while she is away from home chatting with him in 'our wood', gathering lilies and getting her slender hand chastely kissed, she is missed up at the Hall.

> Birds in the high Hall-garden
> When twilight was falling,
> Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud
> They were crying and calling.

There now, whatever can one make of that? As to exactly why the birds were crying 'Maud', your guess is as good as mine. A 'Hall' implies a largish garden, complete with both vegetable and fruit areas. Can it be that Maud, anxious to preserve, in two senses, her ripe raspberries, had firmly netted them in and the birds' cry was therefore one of reproach? Or had Maud, with so much on her mind (well, re-read the poem), forgotten to put out their daily portion of nutritious 'Swoop' and the cry was merely one of hunger? The vulgar explanation that the 'birds' to which the poet refers were, in fact, saucy village maidens

hanging about in the shadows under the bleached limes for who knows what purpose involving absent, moon-faced Maud, can, in the case of this poet laureate anyway, be at once discounted.

So much for problem number one. Problem number two is, if anything, more baffling. Down in Devon, in the spacious ground of 'Myrtlebank', our feathered friends are no strangers to us. They twitter me awake and all day long they come and go at will, making, when they feel so disposed, noises, but never a sound have I heard that bears the very faintest resemblance to the name 'Maud'. I have, plainly, been listening to the wrong birds and so, keen as ever to enlarge my horizons of knowledge, I have been poring over the four volumes of Swaysland's *Familiar Wild Birds*, tastefully illustrated and many of which (Bramblings, Little Stints, Water Rails, Creepers, Siskins) are very far from being familiar to me. Certain of W. Swaysland's specimens can be immediately dismissed from the ranks of those capable of chirping out 'Maud'. The Cole Tit, for example. 'This bird makes no pretentions to vocal proficiency. Its note sounds very much like the syllables "che-chee, che-chee" and when sitting in its nest it makes, if molested, an unpleasant hissing noise suggestive of snakes.' Obviously, there is never going to be a 'Maud' here, nor a Guevara for that matter, and it would be charitable to assume that this bird is attempting to offset the unpleasant visual effect of the hissing by forming with its beak the word 'cheese'. Then there is the Redstart which, though 'its haunts are even near to dwelling-houses' (a Hall, for instance), will monotonously keep on going 'chippoo', which gets us nowhere. When thoroughly bored with 'chippoo' it switches to 'oichit' – equally useless.

The Great Tit may sound promising but in spite of occasionally demonstrating intelligence by tapping on beehives to excite the inhabitants and lure a tasty, honey-drenched bee out of doors and down the throat, it falls down completely when it comes to vocalising ('Pinker, pinker, pinker'). And just as hopeless are the crossbill ('Chip, chip, chip'), the kestrel (a disagreeable querulous screaming), the yellow-hammer ('Chit-chit-chirrr'), the chiff chaff ('Chiff chaffy' when pleased: 'whoo-it' when grumpy) and the dunlin ('Kwee-kwee').

There is a possible explanation, if a not very engaging one. One of the many tricks in nature's amorous battery is to make those besotted with another human being fancy that they keep seeing or hearing the loved one when he or she is not at the moment there (how many of us have jumped off buses and darted up side-streets in pursuit of the loved object, only to be confronted by a total stranger, looking cross). At a distance and in a wind, the imprecise monosyllable 'Maud' might sound like almost any other monosyllable, like the noise made by rooks, for instance. The *high* Hall-garden, you note. It contained a rookery, no doubt. Rooks go 'craaw' quite a lot. A love-crazed poet could easily hear it as 'Maud'. Not a very attractive bird, I'm afraid, but moon-faced milkwhite fauns can't have everything.

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Letters to the Editor

Press Commission Dissenters

Sir, What shocked us most about Paul Johnson's piece (NS 8 July) on the Royal Commission on the Press was not its inaccuracy nor its personal abuse. It was his quite outrageous betrayal of the confidence which normally surrounds the work of a Royal Commission. The temptation before us to retort in kind is strong. But we believe this would be wrong on a number of counts. It would carry the risk of further violating the confidence of the Commission; it would almost inevitably lead into a wider slanging match and it would certainly bore your readers. If, as a result of these considerations, we are placed at a disadvantage, then so be it. We leave it to your readers to make their own judgments.

However, we must seek to defend ourselves by replying to the grossly misleading account by Mr Johnson of what occurred during the lifetime of the Commission. But we will try to confine our remarks to those areas which concern ourselves and his criticisms of our role in the Commission. Yet, where to start? The piece you published is so absurdly unbalanced that it caricatures precisely the kind of calculated misrepresentations about which we complain in our minority report.

Perhaps we should begin by commenting on Mr Johnson's claim that we were the only two people who 'entered the Commission with their minds made up on a number of salient points – notably the need for state interference and the gross bias against Labour and the unions in the press . . .' He describes us as 'the closed-mind tandem' (by which we assume he means that we hold certain beliefs, value judgments and commitments we choose to honour but with which he disagrees; that is normally how one closed mind describes someone else's belief). In fact we do hold certain views and we would be amazed if all members of the Commission, not excluding Mr Johnson, did not hold strong views of their own. There was no 'tandem' between us; we agreed on some things, disagreed on others. There was never any preconceived intention to produce a minority report – a point which was repeatedly emphasised, and, we believe, accepted by the majority of Commission members. It was a matter of deep regret to us that we felt unable to sign the majority report.

Mr Johnson suggests that our 'prejudices' came to a climax over the *Daily Mail* 'slush-fund' affair. Quite untrue. He knows perfectly well – since he was present – that the whole question of press standards, bias against the Left and the general political imbalance of the national press came up many times before the *Daily Mail* affair. Indeed, it probably came to a head at a weekend meeting of the Commission some six months before the *Daily Mail* affair. By the time the *Daily Mail* incident occurred, our minority report was already in draft form and had been circulated to members of the Commission. The *Mail* slush-fund story, in our view, merely provided *further* evidence – true, in a somewhat dramatic form – of what we had been arguing for some time. That was why we felt the matter required further attention.

It was *not* because the Prime Minister had asked for it – although we do not think that Mr Callaghan's request can be dismissed in the silly way Mr Johnson refers to it – accusing Mr Callaghan of being 'paranoid, as always, about the *Daily Mail*'! It is perhaps worth recalling that Mr Johnson rushed into print in support of the *Mail* (his letter in the *Mail* 27 May) before the Commission had even discussed the issue.

Then there is the charge that we, alone, came to the Commission with fixed ideas and refused to shift in any way. This is rather amusing coming from him. Mr Johnson's views on the unions are well known and his attitude towards the Labour Party and Labour Government is some light-miles to the Right of what they appeared to be when he was editor of the NEW STATESMAN. It can therefore be taken, without us disclosing further confidence of the Commission, that he was not the pillar of objective open-mindedness he now seeks to have your readers believe.

As to whether we have closed minds on the question of the political imbalance of the press and the bias against the Left – well, yes, I suppose we have if by that is meant that we are convinced that such a bias exists. Nothing we read or heard in our evidence persuaded us that we were wrong: and nothing in the Commission's report denies it is a fact. Our disagreement came over the degree of that bias and the emphasis given to it in the main report.

In many ways the most objectionable aspect of Mr Johnson's article to our mind is not his mischievously misleading references to ourselves. It is rather the extraordinary passage referring to his role as the protector of the consciences of the rest of the 'weaker brethren and sisters on the Commission' (his phrase). His lone, brave, costly campaign to ensure that they did not slide into our camp: such valour in the face of the mighty odds ranged against him deserves higher acclaim than we can dispose of. We must leave that to our brothers and sisters of the Commission who were kept from our awful grasp by Mr Johnson's single-handed defence of all that is sound and virtuous (after all *he* would not wish to be associated with any 'tandem').

It is in our view a great pity that one member has done such a disservice to the work of the Commission. For all our various disagreements we worked together extremely well and we have nothing but admiration for our fellow Commissioners and staff, who worked so hard, amid mountains of paper, to produce what we feel is a report of considerable value. As we state in our minority report we agree with a good deal of the main report – but, unfortunately, in some important areas we were compelled to register our dissent. We did so after many, long hours of doubt and self-questioning. It would indeed have been much easier to have possessed closed minds. It is sad to have such a squalid sequel as this. But we did not choose it, and we regret it, profoundly.

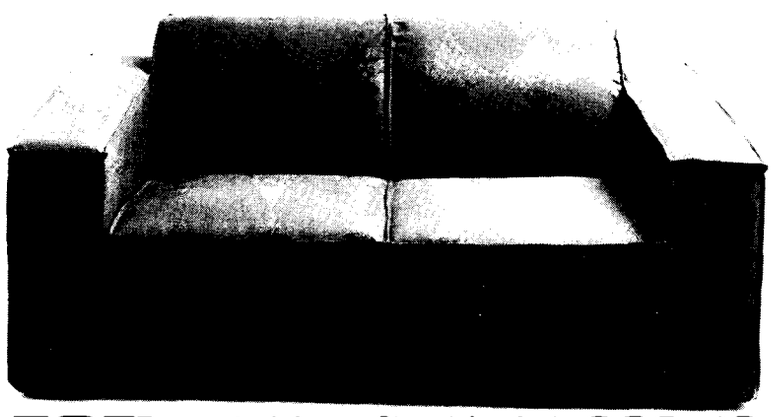
DAVID BASNETT
GEOFFREY GOODMAN
Royal Commission on the Press
27 Northumberland Avenue, WC2

PAUL JOHNSON *writes*: My article was not an 'outrageous betrayal of confidence', and the use by the Goodman-Basnett tandem of the phrase simply shows they don't know what confidence means. The Chairman and the Secretary were well aware in advance that I intended to write an article about the work of the Commission as soon as the report was published, and raised no objection, (though they have, naturally, no responsibility for what I wrote). What undoubtedly *was* a grave breach of confidence was the persistent, and tendentious, leaking of the Report's contents – with particular reference to a minority report – while it was still only in draft stage. Now who, I wonder, was responsible for that?

Quebec's English Minority

Sir, The forceful letter 'The Language of Separatism' (Letters 8 July) about the English-speaking Canadians of Montreal makes it clear that they are not very nice people, but that does not necessarily show that the legislation being prepared is justified. Suppose it were to be shown that immigrants to this country were not very nice people; would that justify a Powellite policy? The argument of the letter runs towards saying that only nice minorities should be tolerated by majorities.

Incidentally, the case of the shop-girl dismissed because she could not speak English is hardly the piece of brutality that it is made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to seem in the letter: there must be shops not very far from Mr Lloyd in Ealing where one would be unlikely to be given a job at all unless one could speak Urdu, and it is not clear why people should not provide shops where the English minority in Montreal can go shopping in their own language. One may be imprudent to be a Welsh monoglot, but surely shopkeepers are entitled to provide service for monoglots in their own language in Southall, Cardiff or Montreal.

Mr Lloyd's atrocity stories about the old-established English Canadian settlers in Montreal are an effective reponse to the parts of Stephanie Williams's article (NS 1 July) which was concerned to tell atrocity stories about the French-Canadian majority in Quebec. All the same, under the new education legislation, schools will continue to be provided for the children of this group in which English will be the language of instruction. The objectionable feature is not the treatment of this group but the fact that, while these schools will be in existence, the children of people who have come to settle in Quebec from other countries or from other parts of Canada will not be allowed to go to them and will have to go to French-language schools. These newcomers will be in much the same position as if a Welsh Nationalist government under devolution ran English-language schools but said that nobody who moved to Wales from London could send children to them. I can think of several words to apply to this education policy, and 'chauvinist' is certainly one of them.

TREVOR LLOYD

4 Leinster Square
London W2

Journalist as Monitor

Sir, I read *Signal* for the *Daily Herald* throughout the last war, and if the Germans (or the *Daily Mail* of 1942) were impressed with its propaganda value – it was a slick production but not superior to *Picture Post* – they must be unaware of the material it published which enabled me and better qualified analysts to glean some valuable information about the condition of the Nazi war effort. The photographs of the Wehrmacht getting stuck in the mud and snow of Russia in the winter of 1941, for instance, presaged its failure to reach Moscow. Pictures of Goering and Goebbels collecting war clothing for their eastern armies on Berlin street corners told their own story.

Why, incidentally, will English writers bandy foreign words about when they are not sound on the rudiments of the language they parade? Mr John Frazer's interesting account ('War Nostalgia, German Style', NS 8 July), is flawed by this incurable habit. *Zweite Weltkrieg* omits the definite article (*Der*) without which it should be *Zweiter Weltkrieg*. In no linguistic context could there be a *Dritter Reich* – it is either *Das Dritte Reich* or *Drittes Reich*. And, while referring to *Die Zeit* correctly, why deny *Spiegel, Nationale Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Zeitung* the article which it demands in German as in English?

WILLI FRISCHAUER

45 Apsley House
London NW8

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Keates and Embellishment

Sir, I know it is not 'the done thing' to complain about book reviews but Jonathan Keates's piece (NS 8 July) about *The Fake's Progress* was not so much a book review, more an exposition of why he has come to dislike me so intensely over the years. It is slightly unnerving to discover that someone you met once over dinner has been closely following your career and cultivating his initial dislike into a controlled but vengeful animosity. I think I've managed to place the dinner party he refers to; to me it was memorable because Harold Acton bribed me 10,000 lire to get him a sight of his *Times* obituary. I liked the concept of being bribed by him but it was a vain boast that I could perform this service and I had to send the 'tenner' back in a plain envelope.

I know that my writing tends to offend aesthetes (it also offends dealers and auctioneers, but that is another matter) and I can only suppose that this is at the root of Mr Keates's antipathy. By aesthetes I mean those who put art on a pedestal, treating it reverently as something above and beyond material considerations. To my mind this does art an injustice. At its best art is very much of this world. Artists are human beings but if they also have genius they may create pictures or objects capable of expanding human perceptions of the world and giving profound enjoyment to generations to come. I have to admit that I am also fascinated by the way art is marketed, abused, valued for the wrong reasons, and emerges with its validity quite untouched, not infrequently wrecking its abusers en route. If you ignore the fact that art is bound up with human beings and their dotty carrying on, you will certainly miss the point of *The Fake's Progress*, the book put together by Tom Keating, my husband Frank Norman and I.

There's one thing I should like to add. By referring to 'the literary Keating produced by the shrewd Geraldine and Frank' he implies, as many others have done, that we're all making a bomb out of it. Has nobody noticed that there's no money in books any longer? Getting into print is, of course, ego-boosting but only one in a thousand makes a fortune out of it. We've received something just below the NUJ minimum for a year's anxious and often frustrating work.

GERALDINE NORMAN

5 Seaford Court
220 Great Portland Street
London W1

Freelance Mothers

Sir, As Donald Gould says, (NS 8 July), the implantation of very early human embryos into the womb of a host-mother is a certainty for the near future. Considered in the light of certain other developments, here and in the United States, this can be expected to lead to a very disturbing social development in the near future – the rise of the professional freelance mother.

Before this century is out, I expect it to be commonplace for rich women, who desire children of their own without the bother of an intervening pregnancy, to have a professional to bear them on their behalf, and pay heavily for the service. The idea is repulsive, no doubt, but that is only because it is new. The idea of becoming a wet-nurse is equally repulsive, but only because it is old.

C. N. GILMORE

39 Beechcroft Road
Oxford

Modern Quotations

Sir, We are at present revising our *Penguin Dictionary of Modern Quotations* towards a new edition. We should be grateful if, through, you, we could ask your readers to send us quotations from any field, especially ones drawn from the last ten years. What we want is anything written, spoken or sung, memorable for itself or for its associations. Wherever possible, we like, for written quotations, to give the book and chapter, or journal and date; and for spoken quotations a time and place. We are particularly anxious to make good omissions in our first edition in the field of the theatre, cinema and television, song lyrics and the sciences and politics.

J. M. & M. J. COHEN

94 Belgrave Road
London E11

Bedridden

Sir, Apropos of Mr Mervyn Jones's musings on the adjective 'bedridden' (London Diary, 8 July), I can assure him that this odd adjective has always given rise to difficulty. I recall that a distinguished Scottish civil servant told me 30 years ago of how the usual crowd of journalists assailed an old Perthshire lady, who had attained the age of 100, with the usual questions about her diet, etc. It appeared that the veteran had none of the usual inhibitions which promote survival – she smoked, she drank and she enjoyed her food. So hopefully one of the newsmen asked her if she had ever been bedridden – 'och-aye', said she, 'thoosans o'times and aince in the Pitlochry bus.'

In the circumstances, and as I am only writing to assist Mr Jones in his musings, I trust you will feel able to publish this letter without my name and address.

ANON

Showing the Blue Flag

Sir, Mr Patrick Wintour's information (NS 1 July) on the Finnish celebration of a Free Enterprise Day gives us dubious credit. In addition to the ecclesiastical holidays there are but two: 1 May and the Day of Independence on 6 December. Mr Ivens may well keep the honour of his invention.

HARRY VARE

Solbacka, Vantaa
Finland

Erotic Verse

Sir, I am currently editing an anthology of erotic verse and hope to include in the book not only work by established writers but poems that have so far enjoyed an underground existence. I mean poems that survive in a modern oral tradition of bawdry, and verse that has been circulated in typescript without ever seeing the light of publication. I am sure there is a vast mass of such material and I would like to hear from any of your readers who have come across such work. I would also like to hear from any readers who, for the love of it, have translated any of the erotic classics (Ovid, Pietro Aretino, etc.)

ALAN BOLD

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

V. S. Pritchett

Songs of Experience

The Novels of Anthony Trollope by JAMES R. KINCAID *Oxford* £9.75

Just as Simon Stylites on his pillar was soon the innocent centre of a huge tourist industry, so the standard novelists, and especially the Victorians, now find themselves at the centre of a huge new 'critical' industry in which competing professors jostle one another round the site. One has only to follow the prolific and obliging cross-references in this new scholarly study of Trollope by Professor Kincaid – he is the Professor of English at Ohio State University – to see how large Trollope's swarm of examiners is and how peculiar their technical dialect, a dialect suggesting that literary criticism has become a form of engineering, presumably suited to students growing up in a technological age. Can they be tempted to see something 'modern' in him? The Professor asks:

> Is Trollope the last of the old-fashioned novelists working smugly within safe conventions and allowing to his readers a full indulgence in the nostalgic pleasures of recognition, or is he the first of the practitioners of 'open form', anticipating the experiments in fiction and holding a moral outlook so advanced it is best understood as 'situation ethics'?

(Had, one might say, Ehrlichman and Haldeman read their Trollope only too fruitfully at college?) After such boldness, after considering such matters as Trollope's stance, his rhetoric and his mimetics, his 'disappearing' style, etc., one is relieved to hear that the answer is 'Yes and No'. Trollope is the usual mid-Victorian mixed-bag and yet he is not. But were safe conventions ever merely smug? Weren't they weaponry?

As the wheel turns, almost any important novelist emerges from disfavour to become 'modern' again – Sterne is a good example – and in the last 30 years Trollope has not been seen as purely a comfort. A. O. J. Cockshut's study – in 1957 – is by far the most enlightening and best-written book on the subject, partly because he relates Trollope's writing to the wounding isolation of his early life: Trollope's regard for the normal was not passive or even acquiescent but the product of an energy that drove him, with a mixture of anger and melancholy, to cover the deep scar of being the outcast son of a gentleman gone downhill.

The struggle turned Trollope into an extravagant 'character' in real life, at once seeking a successful accommodation with a norm, but at the same time being deeply ironical about it, and one can see why as an outsider he would be interminably interested in the conflict of private and public character. Professor Kincaid leaves biography out, but he finds the man in his attitudes and, above all, in his techniques as a novelist. He has read all of Trollope and, book by book, he is a thoughtful guide. He is most suggestive on the notorious question of Trollope's personal intrusions which wilfully break the illusion of his comedies. Art and reality are in conflict. Life is long and art is short. The novelist is a man of conscience, but he has his opportunism and is playing a deep game. We may win but we shall eventually find ourselves to be losers. Experience is its own reward.

Professor Kincaid sees Trollope's intrusions as a new venture towards the contemporary open form of the novel. His novels are mainly comedies of manners that continue the 18th-century tradition of Jane Austen's pastoral world, but in an age in which the pastoral has almost vanished. (For Trollope himself it survived in fox-hunting.) The long-settled sense of feudal community has been smashed by the new money, the rising professional class, the climbing individualism and its greed. God has gone. The middle-class conventions rule. The gentleman – Trollope's very personal obsession – the helpless good man brought up on traditional obstinacies and virtues, is pushed out of the scramble. His decent grousing may become a sort of sanctity and its own melancholy reward; but even sanctity will end in extinction. Trollope, divided between liberalism and conservativism, stands with one foot in the old world and its standards and the other in the new, questioning the romantic illusions of the new order.

Trollope despised the extravagance of Dickens, perhaps because Dickens sprang too gaudily and poetically from the rising class. Trollope admired Thackeray, but disliked his satire and thought *his* intrusive playfulness with his puppets a mixture of whimsy and cynicism. Thackeray was too lazily at home with his readers: the energetic Trollope insinuates an education. He educates by crustiness, by occasional explosions of temper. His is 'a reflexive art' that considers itself. So Trollope peppers the conventions into holes and explains over and over again that art is one thing and life another. There is a battle between the reader and the dismembering remarks of the novelist. So at the end of *Dr Wortle's School* the narrator says:

> I cannot pretend that the reader shall know, as he ought to be made to know, the future fate and fortunes of our personages. They must be left struggling –

– and he might be adding 'bully for them' under his breath. Or, again, the famous Cabinet meeting in *Phineas Finn*, in which Trollope says that his description may have no bearing on the reality: 'There is this safety', he adds – no one will ever know whether the writer was accurate or not. (We may reply, of course, that Trollope was not specifically interested in what politics are about.)

Trollope's novels are fairy tales which, in the interests of exploring reality, he debunks with every kind of irony – sometimes to the extent of a weariness which sets in when laughter stops. Professor Kincaid is very subtle and observant on the extraordinary variety of Trollope's interventions. The society he is describing is so at variance with his own nostalgias that he is driven to mock it by mocking his art.

> He will give us happy endings, plenty of marriages, punishments for villains and the like, but not without letting us see that one source of these patterns is the simple egoism inside ourselves. The effect is the exact opposite of reassurance . . . The attack . . . is upon certainty itself.

Trollope reminds us that unreason is located in ourselves. He traps the reader by exposing the reader's egoism. This makes us feel clever. So perhaps, after all, Trollope *is* reassuring, because he replaces the authority of traditional beliefs by a shrewd relativism: life is going on and on. The message of the Palliser novels is that the real Comedian is Time itself; problems will soon turn themselves inside out. The captivating coquette of *The Eustace Diamonds* will eventually bore the hero because her lies are a muddled poetry: experience knocks him on the head. One of the small yet moving things in the old age of the Duke of Omnium is that the Duke is left to a special kind of loneliness – a loneliness of manner characterised by the language he uses: his children do not grasp the significance of his leisurely and pithy utterances: their syntax belongs to a different age. When the language one has been brought up in dies one is indeed foreign and alone – a point which Professor Kincaid makes when he gets down to the Palliser novels in detail.

But are Trollope's intrusions so very dynamic and are they really enough to bring his work nearer to the modern 'open form', which is, in any case, a matter of visual style? Intrusion is as old as Cervantes – whom Trollope admired – when he set about undermining the Romances of chivalry; in the English novel intrusion is as old as Fielding and Jane Austen, who mocked accepted fiction with more spirit. Trollope's merit springs from the innumerable devices he brought to his story; his inability to stop talking was an amusing foible and led him to the mischievous parodying of his themes, so useful to serial production. The compulsion to go on and on with his characters extends without deepening them, for he is fascinated by the detail of human obstinacy. He is dilatory – human nature is a meal of so many courses – but there are rewards. Professor Kincaid points to an excellent minor example in *Dr Wortle's School*, in which Mrs Wortle is bewildered by her husband's charity to the erring Mrs Peacocke. It takes a long time for the dazed Peacockes of this world to see the light, when they try to put themselves in the 'sinner's' place. Lack of

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imagination, not lack of charity, is her trouble. She says she can't imagine herself ever being in Mrs Peacocke's position, but she will struggle to do so, and in doing so her heart does slowly soften. No histrionics here: the real has become very moving in its awkwardness: 'The end in view', says Professor Kincaid, 'is to make us active, not contemplative, and it is principally up to the narrator to get us in motion and force us into collaboration.' And not to stampede us by some dramatic display of imagery and sentiment which was often the manner of Dickens. Trollope may be effusive at times but – I seem to remember – he is always dry-eyed.

Of course, the poetic gift was denied him, but he was expert on the moral layers of character, being a considerable character himself who relieved the strain by violent laughter. He was far from being the invisible author because he could not be the invisible man. The novel was to replace the sermon; it was a sort of church in which the congregation is allowed to smoke and chatter, and never prays except for place and power. Gossip is the liturgy, tolerance the benediction. Character is fate: one can understand that the novelist who was forced to replace the character denied him by the scurvy failure of family fortune with a character he had to hack out for himself would come aggressively to this conclusion.

Claire Tomalin

Secret Threads

Literary Women: The Great Writers by ELLEN MOERS *W. H. Allen* £7.50
Married to Genius by JEFFREY MEYERS *London Magazine Editions* £5.75

> Women live like subjects of a bureaucracy in which they must read interminable and triplicated forms, whether or not they agree to sign them in the end. Their self-consciousness grows with their reading, so that educated women tend, by 27, to walk about like sensate editorials on the Woman Problem. They are not allowed to escape the sense of species, they are like giraffes reading Lamarck every morning before they stretch their necks.

Mary Ellmann described the problem ten years ago in a witty, fine-grained book, *Thinking About Women*. It hasn't gone away since; and Ellen Moers's survey puts one irresistibly in mind of it. Where Mrs Ellmann hesitates over our inescapable sense of species, Mrs Moers positively rejoices in it. Faced with 'the major women writers' – and some of her majors seem to be major on the basis of having written a lot rather than having written especially well – she finds 'the fact of their sex is, frankly, fascinating'.

One of Mrs Ellmann's points was that critics found it hard to assess a woman writer without measuring her femininity in the process. But this is precisely Mrs Moers's field. She delights in the femaleness of female writing and revels in discovering female Freudian landscapes – any grassy slope, cave, cleft and patch of brambles will do. Again, she identifies warmly with household problems – Harriet Beecher Stowe's sink, George Sand's family arrangements:

> With Sand . . . begins a literary life-style distinctly modern in its middle-class informality, and child-centred domesticity, and dominating presence: the efficient, versatile, overworked, modern mother.

Her book, in consequence, 'is not precisely history, nor is it theory; it is plainly a celebration of great women who have spoken for us all'.

'Us all' encompasses (I think) one sex only; but even to a reader who cannot entirely accept such a sense of separateness, Mrs Moers does convey a generous enthusiasm towards almost every writer she has read, from Flora Tristan and Madame de Genlis to Erica Jong. (Her generosity founders only in feminist principles, as when in a curious footnote she describes Ted Hughes as a 'grotesque figment of the Plath imagination'.) There are moments when she digresses and dilutes herself into mere summary and gush:

> Robert Browning came for Elizabeth Barrett just the way a lover should come for every literary woman, out of the blue, fascinated, enchanted, magnetised by her writing . . .

And there are some outright failures, such as the long discussion of De Staël's *Corinne*, which never for a moment convinces us that the book can be saved for the modern reader, whatever its importance as a piece of cultural history. Mrs Moers twice urges us to 'try to take *Corinne* seriously' and explains how understandable it is for literary women to want to be crowned with laurels, but finds herself forced to admit that 'reading this material with a woman's eye makes it hard to keep a straight face'.

So much for the drawbacks. Luckily there are other passages so good that the book is worth acquiring for them alone, passages where sensitive response to the background of creation produces real insight into a text. In particular, a chapter called 'Female Gothic' gives the best account I have read of the genesis of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, relating it to her own early and distressing experience of pregnancy and infant death, her awareness of the fact that her own birth caused the death of her mother and consequent misery of her father and half-sister, and her enforced, general association of birth with death: her half-sister's suicide, Shelley's wife Harriet's suicide during pregnancy. All this is so much more to the point than the usual evocations of Byron and Shelley telling ghost stories beside Lac Léman during that cold, rain-soaked summer of 1816, that one wonders it hasn't been seen before: but Mrs Moers is the first to notice it.

Her follow-up is as good, still in the Gothic area, a discussion of Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* in which they are related to their author's memories of nursery rough-and-tumble, of the physical closeness of kicking and pinching but also exciting and beloved brothers. As she says, an unmarried Victorian woman was unlikely to become part of any other sexually mixed society in quite the same way ever again once the nursery days were over; and especially unlikely to take part in any physical play. She suggests that the gratuitous cruelties of *Wuthering Heights* relate to 'frankly joyous memories of childhood eroticism': charming to see Branwell's ghost struggling up once again with Mrs Moers's blessing.

These are precisely the kind of insights and suggestions one hoped for in Jeffrey Meyers's little book: for surely there can be no point in simply running through the familiar marital case histories of nine modern writers unless some light is thrown on their work in the process. But Mr Meyers tops and tails his geniuses, their spouses, and a selection of their works, like so many gooseberries to be bottled.

The effect is neat: they are graded for maturity, malice, guilt feelings, frigidity, barrenness and even gluttony. This reductionist approach gets in a good many undeniable facts – although a description of Mrs Hubert Bland (E. Nesbit) as 'the tiresome wife of a polygamous Tory MP' shakes the confidence somewhat – but allows the essence to escape away into the air. Tolstoy, Conrad, Lawrence, Fitzgerald, even Shaw was each more mysterious, more complicatedly set in motion, more subtly related to his own writings than Mr Meyers would have us believe.

And what are we to make of a chapter on Virginia Woolf headed 'Madness and Art' which barely discusses her writing? Or of the dismissal of Katherine Mansfield's best work in a phrase which sets her down as 'the nostalgic sentimentalist of childhood life in New Zealand'? Mr Meyers gives the impression of a man in a hurry, and that is an awkward state for one who dives in and out of so many marriage beds, let alone attempts to unravel the secret threads of the imaginative process.

Among this week's contributors:

MORRIS FRASER, whose book *The Death of Narcissus* was published by Secker & Warburg earlier this year, is Senior Registrar in Psychiatry at The London Hospital and Goodmayes Hospital, Ilford.

CLAIRE TOMALIN is the author of *The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft*; she is at present working on a study of Katherine Mansfield.

PAUL ADDISON lectures in History at the University of Edinburgh; his most recent publication is *The Road to 1945*. He is now working on a study of Churchill.

RUSSELL DAVIES is the film critic of the *Observer*.

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Peter Porter

Func

Sicilian Carousel by LAWRENCE DURRELL *Faber* £5.25

In 1943 Lawrence Durrell published *A Private Country*, one of the best first collections of poems by anyone: it stands alongside Stevens's *Harmonium* and Auden's *Poems* (1930) in that small pantheon of spectacular first books. It is tempting to say that he has gone downhill steadily ever since, especially if one has to review so unsatisfactory a book as *Sicilian Carousel*. Durrell is now more than 30 years and 30 books further on, and it would be a neat calculation to set each of them progressively deeper into the red – for swank, for perfunctoriness and for mystification. And, while one was on about it, one could blame that cultish love of the Mediterranean and its mid-channel islands, which Durrell has done so much to promote.

But, immediately, all sorts of doubts would emerge. His first three books of poems (the later poetry is as flawed as most of the prose) concentrate on Mediterranean scenes; on those ancient sites where the Hellenistic world still offers its profile to the present. Much of the tension of the early poems arises from the intrusion of a tattered modern reality on to the timeless inheritance of the classical past. Contemporary with this finely-poised juxtaposition are Durrell's playful surreal poems, particularly the sequence concerning General Uncebunke. Behind them is *The Black Book*, a put-down of Britain between the wars which still reads well today. The sardonic and the lyrical come together in Durrell's finest poem, 'On First Looking into Loeb's Horace'. It is exactly his tart sympathy for a not very lovable Roman poet who happened to be a genius which is sadly absent from his novels and his later travel books.

> . . . add upon the flyleaf in your tall
> Clear hand: 'Fat, human and unloved,
> And held from loving by a sort of wall,
> Laid down his books and lovers one by one,
> Indifference and success had crowned
> them all.'

Instead, Durrell has fallen into the picturesque and the arcane. Corfu, Rhodes and Cyprus have been logged up in his 'islomania', and the Alexandrian novels have shown there is money in corrupt urban 'epyllia', to borrow an American phrase applied to an earlier manifestation of Alexandrian Hellenism.

Sicilian Carousel shows Durrell's talent in tatters, not least in the few poems inspired by his swing round the island. It's especially disappointing to someone who loves Italy and Sicily and was hoping for some relief from the adulation of all things Greek. The Greeks did put down the first and most persistent layer of the laminated Sicilian culture, but the island has a flavour of its own which Durrell seems not to be very interested in. He gives brief accounts of the chief invaders – Carthaginians, Romans, Arabs and Normans – but he carries his own cocoon of Greek culture with him wherever he goes, and so manages to be reminded of Attica, of Rhodes and of Cyprus by the coastline and the sites of Syracuse, Agrigento, Selinunte and Erice. There is something odd about a travel journal of Sicily which devotes fewer than ten pages to Palermo.

But then it *is* a peculiarly perfunctory book. In each of his previous celebrations of Mediterranean island life, Durrell was writing as a resident of long standing. The 'carousel' of his new book, however, is only a Sicilian coach tour, setting out from Catania and circling the island to end up at Messina, with an optional week in Taormina.

The notion of this knowledgeable exile as an everyday tourist might have worked well, if his ingrained habit of being superior to everything hadn't got in the way. At first I thought he might be about to capture some of the atmosphere of that most charming of travel books, *Letters from Iceland*. He warns us that he has changed the names of his companions on the trip, and that we are to regard all the characters as fictional. Since they include an Anglican bishop, a schoolmaster on the run, an ex-Eighth Army Siciliophil, a spinster named Miss Lobb and a sexy German girl, I had visions of some waspish stuff such as Louis MacNeice reported in his *Hetty to Nancy* letters from Iceland. The egotistical method of Auden and MacNeice still manages to tell one a great deal about Iceland, surely a less intrinsically interesting island than Sicily. But wherever Durrell looks, he is blinded by his own Byronism. The impulse to visit Sicily came from letters he had received from an old friend of Cyprus days, who had settled and died in the island. He quotes copiously from her descriptions of Sicilian sites, but it is difficult to know if Martine is real or whether she too is part of his fictional apparatus. His habit of letting the reader get glimpses of his private life and then withdrawing into generalisation is peculiarly irritating. Byron did not give us any of the letters which Childe Harold's old flames wrote to him, and so kept his hero's mystery intact.

The good things are all insights: the descriptions are just guide-book enthusiasm. He notes from visiting two amphitheatres, side by side in Syracuse, that the Romans built for the eye and the Greeks for the ear. He eulogises the olive tree, not just as the great civilising agent of ancient times, but also as the natural mark of that idealised world, the Mediterranean. At one stage he is recognised and addressed as 'Cher Maître'; on facing pages, he puts on 'a touch of Mozart' and follows it with 'a spot of yoga'. Yet the abiding disappointment is not the book's language but its lack of love for its subject. Perhaps Sicily is too Italian an island to excite Lawrence Durrell properly.

Paul Addison

Pax

Sir Samuel Hoare: A Political Biography by J. A. CROSS *Cape* £10

The men who ran Britain between the wars proved to be a regime of Humpty Dumpties. At the end they had a great fall, their reputations were shattered, and until recent years the verdict on them seemed to be settled beyond doubt: MacDonald, Baldwin, Chamberlain and the rest were failures. They had failed to cure the slump or mitigate its hardships for the working class, failed to make a stand against the dictators until the eleventh hour, failed even as personalities, for they were unlovable creatures. Critics on the Left portrayed them as smelly little reactionaries moved by narrow class interest. The post-war grandees of Toryism, headed by Churchill, looked back on them with the aristocrat's disdain for provincial horizons. Even their best friends, emphasising their redeeming features, sounded as though they were apologising for Jarrow and Dunkirk.

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dispensation: in the history books, at least, Humpty Baldwin and Humpty MacDonald are once again sitting on the wall, dangling their legs and beaming, while the lesser Humpties such as Hoare himself are painstakingly reassembled. In some ways this has been an inevitable and a healthy change, for the conventional accounts of British government between the wars derived mainly from left-wing and Churchillian propaganda of the period. We would have our doubts about a history of Labour since 1945 by Ronald Butt and Bernard Levin, and there is no more reason to believe the history of appeasement by A. L. Rowse and Michael Foot. But what of the alternative vision we are now being offered?

Cross argues that Hoare was, to begin with, a highly able administrator. In the Twenties he built up the Air Ministry, which had been threatened with extinction. In the Thirties he was the architect of two major and complex schemes of reform: the Government of India Bill and the Criminal Justice Bill, both of which were thwarted by events. Hoare was an insipid parliamentarian, but he could oil and operate the machinery of Whitehall, and always knew what he wanted from it. His biographer has a cool and incisive mastery of the Whitehall of the period, and Hoare emerges very convincingly as a wonderfully industrious little dog working a series of treadmills. And this is where sympathy begins to take over, for the contumely heaped upon Hoare and his like depended on the eternal fallacy of Opposition polemic: that all is possible for governments if they will only try hard enough. The new approach emphasises both the internal and external limitations on the power of politicians.

Hoare became Foreign Secretary in 1935, during the early stages of the Abyssinian crisis, and was universally expected to uphold the authority of the League of Nations by organising collective action against Mussolini. Hoare himself issued a ringing declaration to this effect. In practice the French were unwilling to cooperate and the chiefs of the British services were terrified of unilateral action by Britain. Hoare tried to find a way out: an Anglo-French compromise which would give Mussolini a slice of Abyssinia yet would be foisted on the League and appear as a 'League solution'. When news of this plan leaked out Hoare was forced to resign, and Professor Cross is inclined to agree that Hoare was too clever by half on this occasion. But as a good historian he also shows how the pact was very understandable in the circumstances – as, of course, the occasional administrative bungle always is. Hoare retained certain liberal instincts from his Quaker ancestry, and was a genuine Victorian progressive in his views on India and the reform of criminal justice; in his later years he was a notable opponent of capital punishment.

R. A. Butler described Hoare as 'the coldest fish with whom I ever had to deal', and his biographer does not try to make that grasping little soul personally sympathetic. But he does explain him historically as one of the ablest trimmers and fixers of his generation. The danger of the revisionist approach to the inter-war years is that practical administration of the status quo will be held up to us as a model of political virtue. Toiling away on university committees, beset by student rhetoric about magic transformations, our historians are beginning to regard with far too much respect the man who can simply keep the show on the road for another six months. It is still vital to range beyond biography and inquire why the show has been running at all.

C. H. Rolph

The Dark Figure

The Growth of Crime: The International Experience by SIR LEON RADZINOWICZ and JOAN KING *Hamish Hamilton* £6.95

Almost any assertion you can make about crime is wrong, whether you are a criminologist or a tub-thumper. The effect of this book upon most readers ought to be that they should never again lift their voices on the subject except when giving tutorials or seminars; and then they should confine themselves to reading aloud its neatest aphorisms, pausing between each to allow for scribbling and perhaps for thinking.

Examples: 'The more crime there is, the better the chance of evading detection.' The 'dark figure', that is to say the huge mass of unrecorded crime, about which we all guess madly and Sir Leon, in my belief, errs on the side of optimism, 'represents the substance of crime, the statistics only its shadow'. (Incidentally, the much-used 'tip of the iceberg' analogy is no good, because an iceberg tip varies precisely in proportion to its submerged mass, which the crime tip doesn't: the proportions of the crime tip are arranged for us by press and radio. Northern Ireland and the City of Detroit have about the same number of inhabitants, yet Detroit has five times the number of killings. That tells you something about news reporting.) 'Less than a dozen countries, most of them small, can offer anything approximating to full and reliable statistics' – and England isn't one of them. And 'the slightest faltering in the upward climb, however transient, gives birth to too much optimism'.

On deterrence:

> Suppose, suggested the wicked Voltaire, you could sit by the fire in Paris, a glass of brandy at your elbow, and just by pressing a button you could end the life of your rich aunt in Cairo who had left you all her money – how many of you wouldn't press the button?

On the difference between murder and war:

> The revulsion against killing or mutilating other people is overcome by most men when they are told the rules are different.

On getting rid of crime altogether:

> A society which would wholly repress crime would, in the process, have to repress all initiative, all non-conformity, all adaptation to change: there is cause to be thankful that no State has yet found a recipe for completely successful deterrence: if it had, human liberty would be at an end.

On prisons: 'The general level of prisons throughout the world is appallingly low, yet *every* change in prison methods has been a failure.' When men leave prison they 'return to a society where crime and the opportunities for crime are more prevalent than in the past'.

On conjugal prison visits, our pofaced euphemism for sexual intercourse with visiting wives and girl-friends:

> I have visited an *avant garde* [Latin American] prison of this kind, where every prisoner is entitled to a weekly three-hour visit from wife or girl friend. I found it rife with complaints that these women were obliged to bestow their favours on the guards before being allowed access to the prisoners – a modern version of the *droit de seigneur*.

And Sir Leon Radzinowicz's perfectly logical comment on the whole socio-criminological scene is: 'How is it *possible* that delinquency should not increase?'

I have seen this book described as a litany of despair. It is not, though I can understand how the authors' view of morals and behaviour led them to their intelligent demolition of the John Stuart Mill credo that the sole justification for controlling the individual is the prevention of direct harm to others, not to himself. No one, not even Sir Leon, has written anything more intelligently challenging about 'deterrent punishment'. No doubt those who still believe in the dissuasive effectiveness of flogging and hanging could be brought to a change of mind only by brain surgery; but they might, while waiting for a bed, try reading Sir Leon. And he is the only writer to have pointed out consistently that 'the sentencing problem' is really a problem concerning a huge 'middle class' of offenders, sandwiched between the worst criminals who will get long sentences and the trivial offenders who will get small fines, in both cases regardless of age or record.

It could be complained that although this extremely readable book is an impeccably dispassionate presentation of what a variety of experts are thinking (the thinkers repeatedly jostling each other off the stage to leave Sir Leon standing there alone), he then tells us too little of what he thinks himself. Moreover, while the book comes to us as the work of two authors, it is written throughout in the first-person singular. There is quite a lot of this, and I am glad of it, for it is lively and provocative and makes you wish you had said it yourself. But what about Miss Joan King? What does she think? It's impossible not to be reminded of Sydney Smith's reflection on marriage: 'If God should suddenly decide to take one or the other of us, I think I should go and live in Paris.'

One thing that throws the book open to us non-numerates is that, untypically of its essential origins (the Cambridge Institute of Criminology, still using the world as its laboratory), it contains not a single statistical table. It has been discovered that those who can pore over such things with absorption have a special little lobe on their brains. My brain does not have one of those lobes. So to make me understand such matters you have to be a pellucid writer with (ideally) a mischievous turn of phrase Which exactly describes Sir Leon Radzino

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wicz (or Miss King, or both?). This is not just a compendium for criminologists, it is a plain man's guide in an intractable and world-wide moral difficulty; ranging in time and space from the mediaeval Dutch custom of teaching prisoners that one must work to live (they filled the prisoners' quarters with water and left them to pump it out or drown) to Iceland's one and only prisoner who, when a foreign delegation called to study Icelandic prison conditions, was out playing in the band at a local dance. Sad to think that the people upon whom this book could leave the deepest and most salutary effect for good are the people who will never read it, either because their minds are made up and they don't want anything disturbed, or because they don't really have minds.

J. G. Ballard

Grope Therapy

Travels in Inner Space by JOHN ST JOHN
Gollancz £5.50

Five years ago John St John, a successful publisher in his fifties, former Labour borough councillor, happily married and with no mental problems other than an occasional pang at the prospect of death, decided on impulse to join a West London encounter group. With 15 recruits, he found himself in the ground-floor living room of a working-class terraced house, furnished with folk-weave curtains and a circle of cushions arranged round a chamber-pot. Here he spent the next 48 hours with almost no sleep, food or exercise, stripped of his watch and shoes by the group-leader, an aggressive pug-faced blonde from San Francisco who told him to 'get rid of that shit locked up inside you'.

During this period, and the weekends that followed for the next six months, he and his companions were encouraged to insult and abuse each other, deride the most trivial personal characteristics, punch and scream at a hapless cushion nicknamed 'Mummy', and take part in a number of deliberately degrading games, the most enjoyable and meaningful of which was apparently one called 'Mamas and Dadas': they all lay on their backs, waved their arms and legs in the air and whimpered pathetically. Sex played a continuing if ambiguous role, at all levels from forced infantilism to the women dressing up as whores (they thoroughly enjoyed this) and what seem to have been the preliminaries to bi-sexual group copulation, when the participants took off their clothes and crawled among each other on the floor, exploring and caressing each other's genitalia. Of the author's nervousness with the bodies of other nude men group-leader Maxine remarked archly: 'Of course, to be or not to be a homosexual is an individual's personal choice.'

It says a great deal for Mr St John's sanity and good humour that he was able to survive six months of this regime with both his confidence and marriage undented, and even go on to explore the other forms of 'self-enlightenment' – meditation, Reichian bio-energetics, Westernised Buddhism and various fringe psychologies – that fill out the rest of his book. The notion that all the delights of psychotherapy previously reserved for the mentally ill – the hysterical outbursts and haggard confessionals, the limitless understanding and attention of others – might be more fairly shared out among the mentally sane caught on in a large way during the Sixties, and on the evidence of this book the concept of 'psychotherapy for the normal' has now reached a point where one can visualise a future in which the only people suitable for psychiatric treatment will be the totally sane.

Travels in Inner Space suggests that much of popular psychology is now little more than a thinly intellectualised massage parlour. All the participants in Mr St John's encounter group were middle-class, educated, in robust health and comfortably well-off. None of them was in any way mentally ill or disturbed, and could only describe themselves as being vaguely 'angry' or 'blocked'. Many were veterans of previous encounter groups, and subsequently went off to explore other fringe psychologies. A curious aspect of these explorations of inner space is that they all took place in public, in a highly dramatised atmosphere with an appreciative audience sensitive to every nuance of exaggerated behaviour. Clearly the privacy of the consulting room and psychoanalytic couch will no longer do. Freud's view of the unconscious as a narrative stage has been taken literally, and the encounter groups now play the role formerly filled by amateur theatricals. In place of *Journey's End* or *Private Lives* at the village hall one screams at the Mummy-cushion.

Describing his first nude session, Mr St John remarks: 'I suppose you could call it an orgy, but it was a very self-conscious and structured orgy.' The encounter-group regulars were histrionic, aggressive and with a repertory of 'problems' they acted out like polished professionals. The group soon established its own taboos and hierarchies, and it was the done thing to be over-emotional. The author observed that it was frequently the same half-dozen who did the shouting and screaming and then broke down in a paroxysm of weeping as they waited for the comforting embrace of the love-in that followed.

In retrospect, what were the benefits, and did the participants do themselves any harm? A recent Stanford University survey quoted by the author indicates that 'significant pathological injury' was suffered by nearly 10 per cent of regular participants, but from the evidence of this book I would guess that Mr St John's companions were far too tough and self-centred to be hurt in any way. He himself – clearly a likeable and sensible man with an amazingly tolerant wife – is equally non-committal about the hazards and benefits. The solutions, if any, that he and his partners have found seem as undefined as the problems that sat them down round the chamber pot in the first place. All in all, my own sympathies lie with an unnamed character who, during one of the early sessions of screaming and pillow-punching, suddenly stood up, announced calmly that he had more sensible things to do with his weekends, and left. He was savagely mourned.

Bruce Page

Brand X

False Messiah: The Story of Michael X by DEREK HUMPHRY and DAVID TINDALL
Hart-Davis, MacGibbon £6.95

'Michael X' (Michael de Freitas) and 'Hakim Jamal' (Alan Donaldson) were small-time con-men and ponces who represented themselves, to a gullible white world, as potential agents of black political power. Pop-singers pressed cash on Michael in reparation for the 'theft' of black man's music. Female columnists gushed about Hakim's 'life-giving hatred', and his thrilling rejection of sexual equality. ('The best place for a woman is underneath,' he told Jill Tweedie, who retailed his words in the *Guardian* as those of a formidable thinker.) Both Michael and Hakim made large profits, separately, out of claims to be followers of Malcolm X (who, conveniently, was dead). Their careers intertwined at the end with the gruesome slaughter of Hakim's white lover Gale Benson – one of two murders for which Trinidad hanged Michael in 1975.

Luminous names punctuate the grubby tale which Derek Humphry and David Tindall tell. Marlon Brando, John and Yoko Lennon, Sammy Davis Jr, Jane Fonda, Jean Seberg, Canon Collins, Corin and Vanessa Redgrave, Nigel Samuel (son of Howard), Kate Millett and others appear, variously encouraging, admiring, supporting and incompetently defending one or both of these two outrageously obvious fakers. It's probably vain to hope they may now be ashamed of themselves.

Michael and Hakim both made certain discoveries which stirred their con-men's minds. One was that many journalists were ready to be used merely as megaphones: they would amplify, virtually unchecked, any boast you cared to make. Thus Colin McGlashan would credit in the *Observer* Michael's claim to have 40,000 people in his Racial Adjustment Action Society – actually it never topped 200. Thus Hakim could parade London as the genius of the Mal-

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colm X Montessori Schools in California – when a telephone call to Los Angeles could have shown that sad enterprise to be comprehensively bankrupt. Their second – not new – discovery was that people who have made big money in show business are often willing to hand chunks of it over to anyone who will help them pretend that some political or intellectual purpose is concealed beneath the entertainer's mask.

Where Michael and Hakim erred, of course, was in thinking that they themselves were exploiting the fashionable world. Truly, it was the other way round. They provided, briefly, material for writers who needed things to write about, and, still more fleetingly, credit for performers who needed a soupçon of conscience in their images. Briefly, the two crooks experienced a potency wholly inappropriate to their mean capacities. Michael entertained thoughts of international political standing. Hakim conceived himself to be God. But fashion, in its brutal way, moved on. I've always thought that Michael's witless killings – in the Benson case, it seems clear, Hakim was accessory – were part-motivated by his baffled rage on finding that a once-complaisant world had become indifferent to his commands.

Racism is responding to people as stereotypes, instead of as individuals. 'They all look alike to me.' In that sense, Michael was just as surely a victim of racism as a skilled black craftsman forced to work as an unskilled labourer. He was never one of nature's gentlemen. But without the white world's self-serving gullibility – very few blacks, as the RAAS membership figures show, were taken in – he might have stumbled through life without doing really vicious damage to himself or anybody else. His story is a parable upon the lethal effects of naïveté.

Morris Fraser

Striving Unofficiously

The Child with Spina Bifida by ELIZABETH M. ANDERSON and BERNIE SPAIN *Methuen* £7.50 and £4.95

My Children, My Children by ROBERT REID *BBC* £3.50

Spina bifida is a complex disorder of the central nervous system, present from birth. Incidence is something like two in 1,000 births, and the brief, slightly misleading name scarcely gives a hint of the range of conditions it includes, from imperfect closure of a small part of the spinal column to the invariably fatal anencephaly – that is, absence of large portions of the skull and brain tissue. Surviving children have to engage the diverse expertise of doctors, psychologists, teachers, physiotherapists and, of course, parents, and it might look impossible for a useful or comprehensive book on the syndrome to be produced without recourse to multiple authorship, with all its disadvantages. Here, though, is a superb example of what can sometimes be done.

Anderson and Spain have set out, first, to provide detailed information on the condition and, secondly, to make practical suggestions about how problems can be reduced or alleviated. The arrangement of the chapters is clear and sensible; first there is a description of how the maldevelopment arises, with line diagrams, dealing in turn with the associated problems in the areas of mobility, continence, bladder, bowel, and sexual functioning. 'Whenever possible,' say the authors, 'the focus is not simply on the problem but also on discussing its management.' There are middle sections on the child, his family, and the social supports that are or should be available, and on intellectual development and education. Finally there is a practical and ably-documented section on adolescence, and the handicapped child's prospects for training and education.

In the earlier chapters there is perhaps some over-classification, too many a's, b's and c's; also, the technical reach of some parts of the book puts them well outside the scope of the general reader, but summaries are thoughtfully added to these more 'difficult' chapters, which anyhow can be easily skipped without a great deal of the book's interest being lost. One of its signal merits, in fact, is that the brisk, crystal-clear writing makes it perfectly suitable for the average parent of a spina bifida sufferer while, on the other hand, most doctors and other health professionals could read it with great advantage.

In the chapters on education there are, again, no platitudes like 'the child must be made to feel part of the community'. No, we are straight down to programmes, graduated training, ideas, exercises, games, toys, gummed shapes, rings and rattles. Where extra information and help are needed, there are always specific details of where they can be found with book titles, publishers, names of organisations, addresses and telephone numbers; all the way through there is evidence of a wealth of expertise and really imaginative caring.

The authors place strong emphasis on making the right early decisions about schooling, and put forward a well-argued plea for young spina bifida sufferers to be sent, where at all possible, to ordinary schools. Even given the received wisdom (sadly doubtful) that attitudes to handicap have changed greatly, it is this first decision that can define the great watershed between the youngster who passes as 'normal-in-spite-of' and the youngster with a similar handicap who, because of some quirk of geography or planning, will later stand out in numerous subtle ways as different or 'odd' because of unnecessarily protected schooling. A strong impression gathered from this chapter, too, is of volumes of goodwill on the part of teachers unrecognised and untapped because of poor support and information. The authors might also have added that the placing of a handicapped child in an ordinary school has beneficial effects on the 'normal' children.

The book ends with a helpful glossary and some sample extracts from assessment and education programmes; Anderson and Spain emphasise again, however, the 'overwhelming importance in the day-to-day management and instruction of the child of people who are *not* specialists', and that the major focus of attention should be on 'reinforcing and making more effective members of the normal social units responsible for child-rearing – the family, the school and the neighbourhood'. I doubt whether this admirable hope will be fully realised, but Anderson and Spain's book cannot, I feel sure, fail to become the definitive general text on childhood spina bifida.

Robert Reid's book is a very different proposition. Unapologetically clip-board medicine, put together from the TV series of the same name, it bears all the signs of its genesis; in many places it is facile, cliché-ridden, and padded out with *Reader's Digest* vacuities. I am surprised, too, to read that 'most doctors' would not know the meaning of the word 'myelomeningocele', and it is regrettable to see the old Arthur Hugh Clough chestnut ('Thou shalt not kill; but needst not strive/Officiously to keep alive') solemnly quoted yet again, when the context makes it clear that Clough intended the sharpest irony.

But Reid's book has great merits. It is thoroughly researched and, taken as a whole, readable and absorbing. It is the story of a small number of people, scarcely known to one another – parents, doctors, scientists, engineers – who in their various fields have made major contributions to the understanding and treatment of spina bifida. They are stories of persistence, courage and compassion. The first chapters contain a lively account of the collaboration between a Philadelphia surgeon and a determined small-town technician, father of a spina bifida child, that gave medicine the revolutionary Spitz-Holter valve; then comes a description of the first spinal closure operation and the bitter dissensions between the Sheffield-based 'aggressive' school of surgery who operated on children regardless of their likely prospects, and the more conservative group who advocated a degree of selection. Reid then proceeds to Brock and Sutcliffe's alpha-fetoprotein triumph – the successful detection of spina bifida in the uterus – then to Renwick's 'potato babies' fiasco.

The section on John Lorber's pioneering work in Sheffield and his criteria for selection, leads directly to a sober and informed discussion of the fearful dilemmas in which, as a result of their own discoveries, clinicians now find themselves. The paradox is a cruel one: when there was no effective treatment for spina bifida no questions needed to be asked, no decisions were necessary; children with gross deformities were simply allowed to die, and some were even helped on their way by doctors or midwives. But now, are the new techniques to be applied to all child sufferers, or only to those thought likely to benefit significantly? Are babies with severe spina bifida

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to be subjected to major surgery on the remote chance that they will go on living somehow, even at the expense of great suffering to themselves and their families, or are they to be made comfortable until they die, usually before very long?

But the conservative approach, at first sight humane, introduces another 'blatant inconsistency'. It may be decided not to treat a child and he may nevertheless continue to live – as one child did to the age of eight, blind, incontinent, with dislocated hips and an IQ of 80. But the doctor has, ethically, no option but to watch and wait. Reid concludes with a balanced scrutiny of the arguments for and against euthanasia for such children; one doctor, with a spina bifida child of his own, is prepared to become the 'paediatric executioner' for Great Britain. A horrible title indeed, but Robert Reid is right to offer some possible answers for questions that have become inescapable. Death may be a disaster, he says, but is life always necessarily a triumph?

Jeremy Treglown

Gaol Bait

Falconer by JOHN CHEEVER *Cape* £3.95
A Book of Common Prayer by JOAN DIDION *Weidenfeld* £4.25
Johnny I Hardly Knew You by EDNA O'BRIEN *Weidenfeld* £3.65

Five years ago Secker and Warburg published an autobiographical series of letters by James Blake, an American recidivist whose returns to gaol were as much the result of the attractions prison must hold for any homosexual drug-addict as of the compulsiveness of his crimes – themselves mostly related to sex and drugs. The book is remarkable partly for its comic exposure of the grotesque inappropriateness and futility of the penal system it describes, but more for the unconscious insights Blake's letters give into the mental softening-up produced by a long spell in stir. This ruthless, sardonic man dissolves under your eyes into a kind of moist-eyed Rotarian, enthusing about 'such an orderly life . . . of pleasurable pursuits balanced by service' and giving up being pianist in the prison jazz-band in order to play the organ in chapel. So much for the resilience of the human spirit.

It's this appalling emotional adaptability that John Cheever conveys in his latest fiction. Zeke Farragut, an addict since he was prescribed opiates in World War II, finishes a long psychological demolition-job on his wife, family and friends by killing his brother. Prison does nothing to wake up his conscience but succeeds in modifying his sex-life and ruining his prose style. It's unnervingly well done, Farragut's easy mental slide into camp biblical American – 'And then there was to think upon the courting of death and death's dark simples, that in covering Jody's body he willingly embraced decay and corruption' – so much so that I began to want some sign from Cheever that he realises how damp and nasty it all is. It's written in the third person, after all. But he doesn't oblige, and this doubt about the extent of the author's own immunity to Farragut's self-indulgence made me queasy about the pay-off's similarity to *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Like Kesey's novel, *Falconer* raises questions about what you substitute for the disastrous system represented by Falconer Correctional Facility. At a guess, the name refers to Yeats's figure standing unheard by his falcon as it turns in the widening gyre – the predatory, blinkered bird of justice, say, roaming loose now that its social and moral centre cannot hold. Kesey cheats on the idea by setting up a casualty who doesn't really offer any threat to the society that excludes and destroys him. Cheever is more honest, and the hopelessness of trying to arbitrate between a self-absorbed, hypocritical murderer and an insulated, savage, feebly-supervised penal administration in such a way as to make any reform possible for either comes across with real, if intermittent, force.

I prefer Cheever at his less highly-wrought – the bare, alienated idiom of the Californian narrator in 'The Angel of the Bridge', for example: 'The truth is, I hate freeways and Buffalo Burgers . . . I am deeply troubled by the misery and drunkenness I find among my friends, I abhor the dishonest practices I see.' It's not often that the American South West arouses plain speaking: somehow the nearer a writer gets to Mexico the more likely he is to be affected by the literary perception-scrambler which Malcolm Lowry both helped to engineer and was ruined by, and whose latest victim is Joan Didion.

Knocked out of the railway-bookstall stakes by its less than loin-stirring title, *A Book of Common Prayer* is in fact a gripping narrative about what happens to a rich Californian woman when her daughter becomes a terrorist. The various levels of inter-connection between the girl, her drunken drop-out father, her step-father with his rich legal practice among trendy revolutionaries, and the South American regime in which the mother becomes a voluntary exile have a complexity reminiscent of *Bleak House*, based on what is essentially a simple and effective comparison between adolescent rebellion, with all its necessary but seemingly disproportionate suffering for both sides, and revolution. Despite the sensitivity of her treatment of character, Didion's narrative is sometimes needlessly obscure, and the political scenario doesn't in the end come to much more than a gesture. All the same, as usual she provides some memorably funny as well as moving moments – particularly those involving the brutally complacent husband. 'Now', he says in front of Charlotte to her former husband, 'we're going to limit our remarks to areas in which Charlotte has no immediate interest. Sex. Politics. Religion. All right?'

For all the handle-with-care warnings on the jacket of Edna O'Brien's novella – 'The story has as its literary progenitors Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Camus's *The Outsider*' – it would be hard to serve a convincing paternity order on anyone more remote from Ireland than Joyce. The book consists of the pre-trial reminiscences and fears of a woman who has killed her young lover for no more reason, as far as I could make out, than that the poor chap had an epileptic fit on the job. It's a passionate yarn, as O'Blarney's previous readers will anticipate, which takes us to castles in Scotland and hotels in Italy and involves plenty of exotic, demanding action: 'I raised one of my supple legs and to his amazement placed it to one side of his neck . . . and I thought I would flummox him a bit by discussing politics, or the state of the world.' There's some lesbianism, too, to keep everything up to the minute. For all that, the story's heart is in Dublin on Bloomsday – 'Yes, yes,' the heroine exclaims down the phone to her ardent victim. 'Have you said yes?' he asks, as if he can't believe his Joyce-attuned ears unless she says it a few more times. 'Yes,' comes the reply, 'I've said yes.' But if Molly Bloom is the obvious source, the archaisms and solecisms of the narrative also reminded me uncomfortably of Beckett's decrepit old Mrs Rooney, stumbling lecherous and tearful along the road in *All That Fall*. 'Do you know, Maddy,' her husband tells her at one point, 'sometimes one would think you were struggling with a dead language.'

Charles Tomlinson

Mushrooms

For Jon and Jill

Eyeing the grass for mushrooms, you
will find
A stone or stain, a dandelion puff
Deceive your eyes – their colour is enough
To plump the image out to mushroom size
And lead you through illusion to a rind
That's true – flint, fleck or feather. With
no haste
Scent-out the earthy musk, the firm
moist white,
And, played-with rather than deluded, waste
None of the sleights of seeing: taste the sight
You gaze unsure of – a resemblance, too,
Is real and all its likes and links stay true
To the weft of seeing. You, to begin with,
May be taken in, taken beyond, that is,
This place of chiaroscuro that seemed clear,
For realer than a myth of clarities
Are the meanings that you read and are
not there:
Soon, in the twilight coolness, you will come
To the circle that you seek and, one by one.
Stooping into their fragrance, break
and gather,
Your way a winding where the rest lead on
Like stepping stones across a grass of water.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Benedict Nightingale

A la Carte

Mecca *Open Space*
The Deep Blue Sea *Arts, Cambridge*
Cause Célèbre *Her Majesty's*
Are You Now or Have You Ever Been? *New End*
Julius Caesar *Chichester*
Much Ado About Nothing *Aldwych*

I wonder how Ted Whitehead's people celebrate St Valentine's Day. Treacle is no doubt poured into hair-dryers, slippers stuffed with scorpions, and tiny manikins with hatpins in their hearts fondly exchanged over the conjugal breakfast table. Anything is possible in a world where a young man, out to supper with his mother, mistress and estranged wife, can ask what is on the menu and receive the blunt reply, 'you'. *Mecca* is not *Old Flames*: the sexual cannibalism remains strictly metaphoric, and there is more rubbing along than rubbing out. But the relationships on display are not exactly serene. Menopausal aggro is provided by Eunice and Andrew, and more youthful unease by Ian, a football starlet who offhandedly admits that 'when I think of women, I think of fish'. He also suffers from premature ejaculation, which exasperates Jill, who dislikes men and is married to a practising pederast, Martin. 'I'd have had more fun with my thumb,' she informs the budding Best: a line that might be carved for posterity beneath the Whitehead escutcheon, with its curious quarterings of Dutch caps, vaginal douches, intestinal-pink condoms and pubic wigs.

But something has changed. This jaded crew is not bickering in Blighty, but sunning itself in a Moroccan holiday-camp, a glum compound fortified against intruders with barbed wire and broken glass. Attitudes to the host country range from pity for its poverty to contempt for its supposed fecklessness; but when the natives actually gang-bang a vacationer – and incidentally the only one not yet corroded to the spine with disillusion and cynicism – outraged chauvinism asserts itself. An Arab boy, almost certainly guiltless, is attacked by two of the more frustrated and sexually envious Englishmen; and then he has the ill grace to die, leaving the group in ignominious panic. They empty their wallets and buy off trouble, but not without getting a lecture on their insularity and racial conceit from the trim Moroccan who actually runs the camp. The irony of the play's closing line – 'Boy, I'll be glad to get back to civilisation' – would scarcely be missed by an Empire Loyalist in flowerpot hat and regulation warpaint.

It's always good to see a gifted writer, especially one as obsessional as Whitehead, broaden his range; and that's precisely what he's done here. His people are as edgy, mistrustful and hostile as ever, but not only because they've been shell-shocked in the trench-warfare of the bedroom. Both gender and genus now keep them apart. Misogyny has evolved, if that's the word, into xenophobia: culture is ranged against culture as well as sex against sex. But Whitehead's diagnosis of this sad situation might be more telling if he were less aware of his characters' purpose, their slot in his ethical scheme. The trouble with the play may be summed up in the erratic switches of Jill, whose first, feminist view of the rape is that 'it's the worst thing that can happen to any woman – and to a young girl like that!', but, faced with the prospect of a Moroccan jail, is soon shrilly haranguing the victim with 'you were asking for it . . . it wouldn't surprise me to learn she had an orgasm'. She seems more the product of her author's distaste than of his imagination, and Judy Cornwell, all bristling nerve-ends and barely suppressed venom, can do little to reclaim her. Glyn Owen, David Schofield, Jean Boht and others fare better, because Mr Whitehead isn't so unequivocally their enemy; but the same general point holds true of the characters they're playing, too. If *Mecca* were less self-conscious about its moral intentions, it might be a good play instead of what it finally is, an exceedingly interesting one.

It's a nice coincidence that Terence Rattigan's latest piece should hit the footlights the same week as a revival of his finest one, and nice that both should remind us of his most attractive quality, an unpatronising compassion for those pushed over the chintz frontiers of middle-class decency by their own unruly instincts. *The Deep Blue Sea* has, I suppose, dated somewhat since 1952. To desert the marriage bed and set up sexual shop with an unemployed test-pilot doesn't seem quite so appalling now, even if your husband is a judge. But 25 years have not lessened the real pain of the situation, which consists in being emotionally enslaved to someone whose capacity for affection doesn't extend too far beyond his golf-clubs; and Sheila Hancock does not shirk from exposing the uglier, less dignified side of infatuation – an eagerness that would be embarrassing in someone with one-tenth of her grey hairs, a possessiveness that becomes more strident, frantic and self-defeating the more it is resisted. It is a strong performance, even more so than that of Glynis Johns in *Cause Célèbre*, though she, too, injects a good deal of over-age misery into a markedly similar part.

Miss Johns plays Alma Rattenbury, whose misfortune was to live in Bournemouth, not the most comfortable place when your boy-lover splinters open your elderly husband's head. She eventually came to trial as his accomplice, was execrated but acquitted, and then committed suicide, incidents that one would have thought gripping enough in their own right. Unluckily, Sir Terence does not agree. At any rate, he's attempted to bolster the tension by means of a supporting plot, about a frigid matron whose own son has been infected with VD, who consequently develops a savage dislike of the 'corrupter of youth' in the dock, and who is actually elected forewoman of the jury deciding her fate. It's all very improbable, and left me, at least, wishing that he had concentrated more exclusively on what we know from *The Winslow Boy*, not to mention *The Deep Blue Sea*, he does well: cross-examination, judicial drama, and (of course) characterisation of the sinning victim, in this case a weak, sottish, happy-go-lucky woman, in thrall to her feelings and to anyone sharp enough to exploit them. When he limits himself to that, the play is what it should have been all along, sympathetic without becoming sentimental, a rueful celebration of the virtues and vices of the woman of Samaria.

Are You Now? is Eric Bentley's editing of the Hollywood hearings in McCarthyite times, a shapeless but absorbing piece, and exceptionally well acted. *Julius Caesar* turns out to be Nigel Stock, a sour, sly tyrant, squinting out of piggy little eyes at the Roman cannon-fodder. No wonder Gary Bond's swashbuckling Brutus and Charles Kay's sardonic Cassius feel obliged to do him in. Peter Dews's production stays well within the limits of competence, but still serves to show how incomparably alert and inventive the RSC is when the bard is being disinterred these days. *Romeo* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both admired in this column, have now reached the Aldwych; but the pick of the arrivals is certainly *Much Ado*, which matches Judi Dench's sentient Beatrice with a tetchy, snuffling, harrumphing Donald Sinden, quite the most amusing Benedick I can recall.

Television

Russell Davies

Winded

I can't remember a summer when socia and political programmes inserted themselves so often between the sport, repeat and seaside variety, or so often outdic these in entertainment value. Take las week's *Conservative Party Broadcast* (al channels), which illustrated 'the plight of th small businessman' in a film sequenc clearly modelled on Hitchcock's *North b Northwest*. A hapless Tory MP stood i the foreground while a light aeroplane cam roaring up over the knoll behind him an bombarded him with bumph. Then Si Keith Joseph came on, exercising his ne natural-speaking technique whereby he Stops in irrational places then he runs o into the middle of. The next sentence which

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Is all jolly life-like, isn't it? If it were anyone else, you'd think he was just short of breath.

Still, seeing style totally obscuring content was useful spiritual preparation for Monday's *Panorama* (BBC-1). Here La Thatcher displayed for the umpteenth infuriating time her technique of never answering a question – or even appearing to understand it – in a detailed, practical way, but offering instead some parroted definition of its chief component terms. 'But expansion is . . . ', 'reflation is . . . ', she will passionately explain. She really thinks that facing reality is the same thing as classifying it in her own mind. Someone should tell her that the classifications are breaking down.

To *Frost* (BBC-1) Arthur Scargill patiently explained why in his socialist society the small businessman wouldn't have a plight, or indeed anything else. Frost, a small businessman at heart, though a big one in practice, could not have been expected to see the possible advantages of such a future: he might have been expected, however, to imagine what Scargill saw in it, for the sake of argument. But there was no argument. Instead Frost appealed to the audience on an 'It couldn't happen here, could it?' ticket, won a vote of confidence, and never came to grips with Scargill's mechanistic utopianism at all.

The evening's viewing turned into a feast for paranoid right-wing viewers when Frost's programme was followed by an *Omnibus* (BBC-1 report on one of Italy's *Unità* festivals (promoted by the communist newspaper of that name). This was one of those filmed 'impressions' that are very short on commentary. But it abounded in frightening red images, all Lenin and fists; you would have thought that the Italian communists were a very hard-nosed bunch indeed. I have always found them to be no ruddier than the 1945 Labour Government. Their chief fault is their amazingly abstract and windy use of language, out of Marx via the structuralists. The film did suggest this, with an amusing obliqueness, when it showed the communist leader Berlinguer opening his big speech on a sunlit rostrum, and then cut to his triumphant peroration under the searchlights of late evening.

Granada's *Inside British Politics* continues to be a useful stimulant to the brain at Sunday lunchtimes, even though this week's edition – a re-run of the famous IMF loan Cabinet debate, recreated by journalists – registered a slight drop in temperature after the previous Sunday. In that programme, a real Minister (at the time), Sir Geoffrey Howe, was seen trying to knock the Directorate of Fair Trading Bill into shape, with consumer groups pressuring him from outside, Labour and his own Sally Oppenheim worrying at him in Committee, and a team of civil servants sorting out with him the verbal formulations that would be enforceable at law. But all of this made so little difference to the Bill that one had to agree with presenter Professor John Mackintosh, MP: it looked like a large waste of man-hours. In particular, it was distressing to get the impression that very little linguistic ingenuity had been applied to the thing, by the civil servants or anyone else. The essence of compromise, one suspected, lay close at hand, but undiscovered – in the dictionary.

Two big BBC documentaries fell well short of the expectations raised by publicity. The first of the *Philpott File* (BBC-2) programmes on drink was a very dull recitation of familiar facts about the Big Brewers and the Real Ale campaign. Philpott's closing remark, endorsing CAMRA's derisive name ('Eurofizz') for the standardised lager-beers now being brewed in this country, gave the programme a sudden late thrust of attitude which seemed gratuitous, even rude, after the previous blandness. (The show that followed, a repeat of Rene Cutforth's survey of the Twenties, showed how a rude attitude can, and on this showing, *should* be maintained throughout documentaries of all kinds. Bring back bumptiousness, I say.)

A Day In The Life of the World (BBC-1) started in promising if trendy style, with Olivier Todd's warning that we should be critical of the 'incestuous' programme to follow. But what was there to be critical about? This inclusive ragbag of news presentations from all over the world on a single day – 6 October 1976 – was interesting as to techniques, backgrounds, atmospheres, levels of competence; but nothing coherent was said about the way news is managed, sold or suppressed. The nearest we got to inside information was in the documents circulated among the UPITN and VISnews film-packaging services in London. These agencies have lists of 'news preferences' (and news bans) for foreign lands. In Saudi Arabia, for example, there is a strict ban on news of Israel. Thai TV likes, above all, royalty and war footage from *anywhere*. As for the readers, a girl called (I think) Bimbo Roberts from Nigeria enunciated her bulletin more beautifully than news deserves.

Readers who saw little or none of all this must have been watching the *Golf* or the *Cricket* (BBC). The Golf presentation team would do well to ask Henry Cotton back next year. As a commentator, he is right in their easy-going style. Richie Benaud is current king of cricket, having got to the stage where he can tell you where the next catch will be taken. The advantage of TV sport, of course, is that it has neither telephones nor Lord Longford in it, let alone both.

Tom Disch

A London Spring

It's May and suddenly the cherry tree
On Ixworth Place recalls
Its previous existence as a dandelion.
Pensioners bask in their windowboxes.
Old bedsprings force their way
Through cylinders of mud:
In another month they'll have become
Beautiful black umbrellas.
Even the cars along the kerbs
Throb with new possibility
As they imagine an infinite parade.
The very pavements are inspired
To breathe
Their dappled axioms
To the budding leaves.
Stockbrokers' children rush out-of-doors
To gather the spring's traditional bounty
Of sparrows and pigeons, which still
Fall, fluttering,
From the eaves.

Opera

Eric Sams

All Change

D'Oyly Carte Season *Sadler's Wells 4-23 July; further performances of* Iolanthe *(new production), 15 and 16;* The Yeomen of the Guard, *18, 19, 20;* The Gondoliers *21, 22, 23 July.*

I unavoidably missed the premiere of Sir Michael Tippett's new and much-eulogised opera. By next week, though, I shall have seen and heard *The Ice Break* – again inevitably, with all that hot air in circulation. Meanwhile I settled for the indisputable masterpieces now showing at Sadler's Wells. Alas, they are not showing to full advantage, in my view. Personally I look askance at the bluff no-nonsense Anglo-Saxon attitude to Sullivan (perhaps derived from Sir Malcolm Sargent, whose high-speed drill often seemed to me to achieve more polish than penetration). No composer was ever less English, whether in genes or genius. By temperament and training he was a master of the Leipzig school; and his basic tempi should surely be restrained, like those of Schumann, or even Wagner. Tempo rubato seems especially apt for the *Pirates,* which began the season. But Royston Nash's direction often sounded far too brisk for the singers' comfort, not to mention mine. That impression was exacerbated by his tendency to inflexibility. If not exactly a lightning conductor, he did at times appear to have a rod of iron, which could transform the brilliant (well played, that piccolo) into the flashy. Worse still, Gilbert's scansion was swept off its metric feet. I found myself unable to pick up words that I've known by heart for years. What really is the sense of G. or S. when taken too fast for the text to be fully comprehensible, even when carefully articulated by skilled professionals?

Articulation is vital, because the book is the spine of each Savoy opera. No wonder Gilbert was so obsessed with structures, hierarchies, disciplines of all kinds. His lines embody law and order, government, the family, duty and responsibility, the ineluctable cycles of age and the seasons; these are the solid foundations on which his world is carefully knocked down. Over and around these strongly-marked and rather sour-looking features the music plays like a sweet smile. Force it, and you get the grinning rictus of ill-fitting dentures.

In Act II the expression softened some-

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what, and even grew ingratiating. More relaxation gave the principals time to show their paces. Michael Rayner, as the Sergeant of Police, never put a foot wrong, least of all when pretending to fall over. He is not only an accomplished singer but a gifted mime in the Dan Leno tradition. James Conroy-Ward as the Major-General timed his attack well; Meston Reid as Frederick made the most of that unloving and indeed ruthless hero; Julia Goss sang Mabel with a saucy ebullience that added some nice touches of coloratura to her girlish cheek. The chorus of nubile daughters made a picture almost as pretty as Sullivan's typical musical imagery of frilled bonnets with the wind playing among the strings. His happy ladies' entries testify as clearly as diary entries to the wooing tenderness of his technique.

Let's hear that in the music, whatever the tempo, and the season's success is assured. On the first night, the audience, though politely enthusiastic, was soon ready for that admirable facility, the private bus to the West End and mainline stations ('sweet to ride forth at evening from the Wells', as the poet presciently sang). No doubt it was just coincidence, but the conductor was also a driver.

Films

John Coleman

Growing Pains

The Best Way to Walk (X) *Scene 2; from 17 July, Screen on the Green*
The Devil's Playground (AA) *Warner I*
Fun with Dick and Jane (A) *Odeon, Haymarket*
Smokey and the Bandit (A) *Plaza 1*
Brother and Sister (AA) *Paris Pullman*
Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger (U) *Empire, Odeon 2, Kensington*

Our annual London Film Festival picks up a retroactive accolade this week: the two movies that head my list were first shown during last year's generous proceedings under the rubric 'New Directors'. Both deal in stages of growing to manhood; both imply, when they don't absolutely scream it, that pubescence may be hell for males small and big as well as for their currently more fashionable maimed sisters; both – along with brother Blake, the visionary precursor of Freud and company – say, 'Damn braces. Bless relaxes.' Claude Miller, who made *The Best Way to Walk* (in French, *La Meilleure Façon de Marcher* and meaning something like 'the best way to get along'), came to direction at the age of 33 after a longish apprenticeship, mostly as close assistant to Truffaut. David Grant of Oppidan Entertainments, hitherto better-known for their devotion to forms of porn, is to be congratulated for a certain audacity in putting this one on in a Leicester Square venue, outside the usual art-cinema circuitry, somewhere near the deep throat of commercial moviedom. Miller sets his story, which he wrote with Luc Béraud, in the summer of 1960 and a holiday camp for boys, monitored by six young men and a wonderfully pompous Director (Claude Piéplu). A couple of the monitors, willowy Philippe (Patrick Bouchitey) and philistine Marc (Patrick Dewaere), provide the focal interest. Looking for candles during a thunderstorm blackout, Marc bursts in on Philippe, to find him bewigged, made up, in a flounced red dress. From then on, though Marc returns noncomittally to his game of poker, things – as one might reasonably expect – go awry between the two youths. A come-hither, go-away relationship develops, with both hanging on at different moments.

What Miller would seem to be saying is that sexual straightness is relative; to each his own manner of masturbation fantasy; whatever turns you on, in a wild, private way, is all right. For he not only gives Philippe, incidentally the Director's son, such lines to speak. By supplying him with a beautifully understanding girlfriend, Chantal (Christine Pascal), with whom he fails to achieve first congress on a Sunday when she comes – at his behest – visiting, Miller leads towards a last episode ('A Few Years Later') in which Philippe and Chantal are seen, chicly unmarried, looking over an expensive flat: the estate agent, of course, is Marc, conventionally wed and envious. Freeze as the two fellows do an 'After you' at the door. Before this, back at the camp, there has been a series of ritual humiliations, stopping short of sex, performed by Marc on Philippe, stressing the latter's troubled, bookish effeminacy and – via a shot or two of a crying child – hinting that Philippe's apparent weakness stemmed from a need to be liked in infancy. I think Miller sells the pass more than he knows in an orgiastic scene where Philippe, instigator of a costume ball as the theme of the camp's farewell party, emerges in full drag (with a pencil-moustached Chantal wishfully understanding on the sidelines) and flirts with Marc, fondling his buttocks as they dance, kissing him, finally (in an ill-advised stab at melodrama) shoving a knife in his leg. Maybe Mr Grant of Oppidan felt closer to home ground here. Elsewhere in this nicely-textured and composed piece, there are great comic strokes, most of them handed over to splendid Piéplu in a role that asks him to be alternately fussy and mad – his self-congratulatory speeches to the assembled kids, about a Suggestion Box, and firing of a monitor found in possession of dirty postcards – and exceedingly dry: his classification of the scabrous contents of the Box, a tight-lipped demand at the costume ball for an 'orangeade – with a little arsenic'. As with several other fascinating movies, this is much better than the sum of its parts.

So, too, is the Australian Fred Schepisi's *The Devil's Playground*, again set back in time, 'Autumn 1953', and place, a college-seminary for boys on their way to religious imprisonment. The main child, a 13-year-old, Tom Allen, is very well found in a lad called Simon Burke, who has a snaggle-toothed smile of great sweetness, the more handy in that the Tom-character is supposed to be a chronic bedwetter of instinctive goodness, constantly getting late marks for having to wash out his soiled pyjamas.

Schepisi, who has clearly mined a seam of autobiography in assembling this handsome, pensive piece, *sui generis*, somewhere between document and diatribe with the unlikelier bits probably taken straight from life, does rather better with the kids, differentiating some half-a-dozen economically and credibly (and conceive of the difficulties in getting youngsters to enact the furtive motions and outright slang-speak of budding sexuality without the wrong sort of giggles), than with the Brothers of the Order. Thomas Keneally, the novelist, is exquisitely embarrassing as a balding, brown-habited hobbit of a visiting Father, all smiles, bad jokes and hell-fire out of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: it seems appropriate that he should try to cure Tom's nightly enuresis with a tiny phial of holy water from Lourdes.

Not for the first time, it strikes me that, when authors in any of the arts attempt to parley life into fiction, the result will lean into surrealism: see Jean Vigo and our own Lindsay Anderson. Here we have a Brother Francine, all angles and angst, who sneaks off to look up girls' crotches at the swimming bath during a trip to the big city and subsequently suffers wracked dreams with matters going further; Brother Victor, everyman's idea of an Aussie and good fellow, scarcely seen without a drink in his hand, and hopelessly picking up two dreadful tarts in a bar with remorse setting in in the old nick of time; other Brothers, all hearty or heartless around the crucial fact that cold showers and warm prayers avail little against the surge of growing pains. I doubt if there is still much of a message for today here but the film builds its pressures steamily enough for one to clap hands at Tom's last-reel escape.

Ted Kotcheff's *Fun with Dick and Jane* is sometimes so, thanks to George Segal and Jane Fonda as the rich couple with a kid and a mortgage, whose life-style crumbles when George is fired but reassembles itself when they take to robbery and blackmail: great one-liners and situations (Mordecai Richler was one of three on the script) – the moral is nowhere. Similarly, *Smokey and the Bandit* takes over from items like *The Sugarland Express*, with almost everyone against the fuzz as Burt Reynolds, another chap and cute Sally Field (a bride who deserted at the altar) are chased by incompetently driven cop-cars – 'smokeys' – as they race a cargo of illegal booze: Jackie Gleason as a Sheriff Buford T. Justice in brute pursuit utters bad words but f— becomes 'F.O.' or is drowned by an auto horn: hence the cunning 'A' certificate. All right if you like reading carbons. The veteran Tadashi Imai is, record has it, big box-office in Japan: *Brother and Sister* is a thrown-together melo about a good sister, an errant one and a very tall, jean-bulging brother, a Thirties story twice filmed before, updated, and largely for students of the Nipponese love-hate affair with Hollywood and the Americanisation of their once-inscrutable culture. Sam Wanamaker's

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Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger has the odd good monster, being essentially a Ray Harryhausen outing, computer dialogue, a basic inertia: even the Colossus of Bronze, the Trog, a giant mosquito and a sabre-fanged tiger move creak-i-ly, like that.

Ballet

Oleg Kerensky

Kinds of Constellations

Nureyev Festival *Coliseum*
John Curry Theatre of Skating II *Palladium*

It is impossible to do justice to all the dance attractions of the past two weeks, which include the Frankfurt Ballet in Brighton, interesting for its rarity value rather than for its dancing or repertoire, the Royal Ballet with some new casts at popular prices in Battersea Park, and Ballet Rambert's extraordinary Lorca concoction by Lindsay Kemp and Christopher Bruce – a 90-minute extravaganza rightly abused by the critics for its pretentiousness and lack of dance interest but wildly cheered by large young audiences at the Round House. Priority must be given, however, to the superstars, a bevy of whom are just finishing the Nureyev marathon at the Coliseum while another has just moved into what used to be its rival as a music-hall, the Palladium.

Victor Hochhauser's Nureyev Festival, which has brought Makarova and Rudi together in *Giselle* for the first time and achieved the almost incredible feat of presenting Fonteyn, Makarova, Seymour and Nureyev in *Les Sylphides*, is ending this week in something of an anti-climax. Makarova is not seen at her best either in Flemming Flindt's highly dramatic *The Lesson* – she is ingenious but too sophisticated – nor in his slightly tentative recreation of a pas de deux from Bournonville's forgotten *Toreador*. She does not appear at all this Friday and Saturday, despite advance publicity suggesting that she would do so. Nureyev is again stunning in *The Lesson* and has a good shot at *Pierrot Lunaire*, but this Glen Tetley work looks increasingly like a poor man's *Petrushka* and has lost the impact it had when Christopher Bruce first danced it for Rambert. Flindt's *Trio*, to some attractive live percussion music, is a mildly amusing filler, combining acrobatics and flirtatious rivalry, but it goes on too long. The Danish guests include Arne Villumsen, a talented and good-looking newcomer, and the glamorous Vivi Flindt, but there isn't a great deal for them to do. Still, *Giselle* and *Les Sylphides* were marvellous, Fonteyn and Nureyev acted *Marguerite and Armand* even more intensely than before and he was back to very good form in the virtuoso tricks of the *Corsaire* pas de deux. It has been a season to remember with gratitude. Next week Makarova is there again with Baryshnikov and the stars of American Ballet Theatre.

I make no apology for bracketing John Curry with these great dancers as a superstar. Since his show at the Cambridge Theatre earlier this year, he has developed from a brilliant champion skater with a lot of charm into an extremely professional theatrical performer with extraordinary charisma. The new show is bigger and better in every way – more space, more attractive costumes and settings, and better choreography. The highlight, for ballet-goers, is *Icarus*, virtually a solo for Curry by John Butler to specially written and highly effective music by Gordon Grosse. Helped by Nadine Baylis's flowing cloak and symbolic sun, Curry makes us forget the wonders of his skating technique and see him delighting in his flight to destruction. Several times during the evening, art takes over from sheer exhibitionism, though there is plenty of that too. *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* and *Jazz Suite* are repeated from the last show, the latter newly costumed and with Curry dancing more of it himself. He appears as a hussar in the schmaltzy Ivor Novello-ish number to music by Drigo which Ronald Hynd has made as the opening of the show, and as a pearly-king newsboy in Hynd's finale, to music by Sullivan. He has also made a suite of jolly dances to British folk tunes, in which Robert Metcalf, a 20-year-old from New York, dazzles us with his boyish smile and slightly Mick Jagger-ish manner.

Curry, who is doing far more himself than in the previous show, has now found a formula which combines good popular entertainment with plenty to please expert lovers of skating and ballet. It's a pity that the orchestra is a bit thin and has to be amplified, but the rest of the show is so good that one hardly notices.

I hope to discuss the Rambert and Royal Ballet seasons next time. Meanwhile, a warm welcome to Norman Morrice as director of the Royal Ballet, despite the rather secretive nature of his appointment. Surely, in 1977, there would be something to be said for open advertisement and even for consultation with the company, rather than presenting them with a *fait accompli*? Dancers who asked 'Norman who?' will soon find that he is approachable and sympathetic, will be ready with encouragement and criticism, and will take a keen interest in classes and rehearsals. It is no secret that Kenneth MacMillan, his predecessor, often seemed shy and remote and it's also no secret that I have long taken the view that he should be replaced. Evidently he came to think so too, finding that he simply could not get on with his new *Mayerling* while burdened with other duties. He should now be a better choreographer, as he evidently was when he did his Fauré Requiem in the freedom of Stuttgart. Morrice, a man of wide experience in all forms of dance, wisely said that he will look and listen before making any major changes. When he is ready to make them, he will need to be tough in overcoming the conservative prejudices of the establishment. My impression is that he well knows what needs to be done; I hope it will be possible for him to do it.

Art

John Spurling

Human Bondage

Portraits by Graham Sutherland *National Portrait Gallery at Carlton House Terrace*
Sutherland 'Bees' *Marlborough Fine Art*
Fabergé *Victoria and Albert*

The Tate's well-known painting of Somerset Maugham was Graham Sutherland's first portrait and it remains his best. The evidence for this gloomy verdict includes 18 finished portraits, many drawn and painted studies, and a detailed catalogue by John Hayes, the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, who goes so far as to compare Sutherland with Titian and Goya. I am as keen as the next man that we should not make unapproachables of dead artists, but I fear that Hayes's almost unqualified admiration for Sutherland must be partly born of panic. Portrait-painting is not at present – except financially to some of its practitioners – a flourishing art. To have even one distinguished artist still at it must, for a man in Hayes's office, represent some hedge against chaos and the triumph of photography.

But Sutherland is an odd person to be left holding the banner. His speciality has always been in evoking the primitive, in reminding us that landscapes and their natural contents – trees, rocks, thorns, insects, birds, beasts – remain not only visible objects beyond the edges of urbanisation but potent images of the primitive in ourselves. His characteristic method is to anatomise his object with lines in pencil or ink and to suspend it – or strictly, since he tends to eliminate any sense of the third dimension, pin it – against a ground of clear, luminous colour. The principle is that of the mousetrap: the colour lures the spectator to the scene, while the hard, spiky lines of the object in front catch him over the back of his unconscious. Sutherland, for all his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1926, seems to be a bit of a Manichee. He sees Nature not as it sees itself, nor perhaps as God sees it, whole and indivisible, but as a duality, beautiful and ugly, sweet and cruel.

The portrait of Maugham emerges logically from this view, a reptilian human of commanding presence, shown full-length on a tall, thin canvas, the arms lightly folded over the soft greeny-brown velvet jacket, the legs in slate-coloured trousers crossed so as almost to threaten the spectator with the knife-edged crease, the tawny, wrinkled head thrusting up and back, the black eyes staring down appraisingly. Perched on a basket-work stool, sunning itself against a rich yellow ground, the figure seems half in repose, half coiled to strike. Questions of character, of personal complexity, of hidden depths of thought or feeling are all resolved in this fully externalised image. It makes no odds if Maugham was actually thinking about his lunch, since the spectator

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is made to feel that he himself might easily be that lunch.

Sutherland's second portrait, using the same shaped canvas, is a companion piece. Edward Sackville-West, seated on a tall upright chair with arms, his hands clasped nervously across his midriff, his sickly pale face again seen slightly from below, his crossed legs turned deprecatingly sideways and merging as if for camouflage into the crepuscular red-brown tones of the ground, might be some nocturnal creature poised for flight but momentarily hypnotised by an intruder. Whatever it was that inwardly tormented the late Lord Sackville is seen by Sutherland as a purely physical image of extreme diffidence, amounting in the real world of cultivated humans to which the sitter belonged (as opposed to the suggested world of primitive Nature where he would be simply potential prey to the predator) to the willed, fundamentally aggressive exclusion of others from his privacy. Already it can be judged, even in this striking portrait of someone he knew well, how inadequate Sutherland's experience in the depiction of physically complex objects in a landscape is likely to be in the portrayal of psychologically complex human beings.

He says in an interview in the catalogue that 'the last state of man holds for me the greatest interest' and that in uncovering the real personality of his sitter his 'concern is primarily with the physical evidence. If I understand enough of the forms I see, the rest follows'. In practice, although he is much concerned (as his painstaking studies show) to get a linear likeness, his commissioned portraits neither contain the primitive associations still at work in the *Maugham* and *Sackville-West* nor break through to a more subtle approach. Sutherland's half-way house between Nature and man is theatricality, a reliance on seductively coloured backgrounds, mannered poses (he goes so far as to show the hands of one sitter tied behind his chair) and devices with tone, highlights and compositional lines so as to surround the blandly uninformative faces with a spurious sense of dynamism. There are one or two exceptions. The heavy grey mass of Lord Goodman in profile against a dark red ground is both genuinely stately and at the same time a humorous image, while the two portraits of Baron Elie de Rothschild are at least equivocal: is this wolfish-looking man with the teeth bared in a smile and the brilliant blue eyes just the good sport and nice chap he is posed as, or is Sutherland's customary theatricality here being used against itself, deliberately to arouse suspicion? The artist's earnestly observant self-portrait (dressed in green, with green eyes, against a green ground) seems to preclude any such notion. This is the romantic naturalist in his habitat, barred perhaps by temperament and certainly by his flat technique from the sophistications of the great portraitists.

Significantly Sutherland's charming new set of aquatints of bees at the Marlborough is weakened only by the portrait of the beekeeper. The bees themselves are right up Sutherland's track: strange articulated machines engaged in dynamic rituals against plain grounds of predominantly yellow and green. Here the queen, closely encircled by her striped, purple-winged, goggle-eyed courtiers, is undeniably sovereign, not a grandiose queen *in vacuo* like the portrait of Helena Rubinstein.

The art of Carl Fabergé was to devise fresh possessions for those who already possessed everything they could think of. His solution was neither to make things of beauty, which presumably they wouldn't have appreciated, nor to use only the rarest and most expensive materials, which perhaps they wouldn't have cared to pay for, but to combine ingenuity, minute craftsmanship and an extraordinary variety of semi-precious materials. These are not objects to be lived with and contemplated but to cause momentary surprise and delight – children's toys for adults. Displayed in lit cases amidst darkness, they ought to be in their element, except that their profusion and untouchability sometimes detract from their individual quality. The gold orange-tree with nephrite leaves among which grow white enamel flowers with diamond centres and fruit made of topaz, amethysts, pale rubies and champagne diamonds is amazing, but you need to be able to release the singing gold bird from its top and to shut your eyes to some of the other contents of the same case. Many of the figures – animals, bold boxes and elaborate Easter eggs – are plain vulgar, or to be accurate plain imperial; but for the occasional fairy-tale fantasy, for a kind of genius for the trivial, you have to hand it to M. Fabergé.

Weekend Competition

No 2472 Set by C. Vita-Finzi

Oxford University Press are publishing a new series of books which offer 'the basic equipment for developing a Marxist theory' of Politics, Literature, and other disciplines. Extracts of up to 150 words, please, from *Marxism and Trichology, Marxism and Entomology,* etc; by 29 July.

Result of No 2469 Set by Jules the Rook

A degree in journalism at the Simon Fraser University in Vancouver includes a course on the NS; we asked you to imagine the sort of exam questions they must set.

Report by Len the Unlucky

We extended the deadline on this comp as far as we could, in the hope of netting a few disgruntled Canadian entrants; but they are all maintaining a prim and sniffy silence over there. As for the UK entries, what surprised us most was the genuinely questioning spirit in which so many of them were phrased. Lots of you were clearly concerned to discover, for instance, whether Paul Johnson was further to the right than Arthur Marshall, or vice versa. We don't want to labour the point, but we were, after all – following the example of Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* – looking for *Frage ohne Antwörte*. Two quid for each question set.

1. Is the 'Comp Complex':—
   a) A suite of well-appointed offices in fashionable Holborn?
   b) The feeling you get when Parrott wins and you don't?
2. If you open the NS at the letter pages is the political content left of centre?
3. Which editorial quirk have you found most irritating in 1977:—
   a) The PR job on that very ordinary-looking bishop that heads the chess column?
   b) The fact that one of the first three crossword solutions opened always comes from some desirable overseas location?
   c) The excessive coverage of the needle fight between Dave Boy Fenton and Clive H. James?

TIM HOPKINS

1. 'Alan Watkins was a popinjay trying to be an owl; James Fenton is an owl impersonating a popinjay.' Discuss.
2. Which NS article, or series of articles, in recent months do you consider the most money for jam? Candidates may *not* choose to write on Anne Bennett.
3. 'A quibble was the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world and was content to lose it.' How far is this true of the work of any *one* prominent competition-winner?

BASIL RANSOME

1. Circle the pseudonyms among the following contributors to the NS: Eric Korn, Benedict Nightingale, Roger Woddis, This England, Corinna Adam.
2. If Paul Johnson has red hair, and Mrs Thatcher uses a blue rinse, what about Crucifer? (You are permitted to use up to six coloured pencils.)

V. F. CORLEONE

1. 'This left-wing rag whimpers to its ignominious end in a farrago of sociologists, Durex and free lectures.' Discuss.
2. Write notes on (a) the Competition Complex; (b) Spiro Keats's use of the imperative subjunctive; (c) the infallibility of Little Keith; (d) the unacceptable face of Fat Jeff.

A. BOTEMAN

1. Choose any paragraph from a recent review by John Coleman and turn into comprehensible English (Time limit: 3 hours).
2. Examine the frequency of promises to award substantial competition prizes; correlate with the failures actually to do so. Interpret the data, having regard to the concept (obviously approved of in the comp complex) of the archetypal NS reader as an altruistic, long-suffering beast who values the race more than the prize.

JIM ANTHONY

1. 'Opaque refutations of complex economic articles, petulant denials of the who's-screwing-whom revelations of the sci-fi book review columns, heated discussions of the correct rhyme for 'penis', other letters from Clive James: these are the alpha and omega of a successful letters column.' (Anthony Howard) Discuss.
2. What are the mathematical chances of a given author not being a personal friend of the book reviewer?

MORAY MCGOWAN

It costs 7p or 9p in UK tender (plus envelope) to enter a NS Crossword. There are three prizes of £2 book tokens. Rate your chances of profit, and estimate the number of wins needed to gain a book. W. S. BROWNLIE

'The front half is heretical theology and the back half theological heresy.' Expand.

RUSSELL LUCAS

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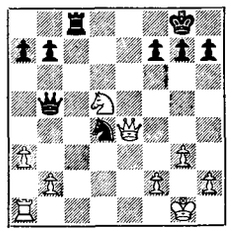
Tony Miles

Chess

No 42 **May Problems contd.**

Problem 36 (Debarnot-Miles, Las Palmas 77)



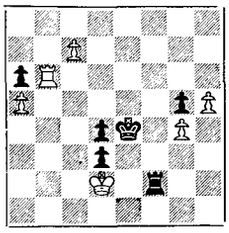
Since it might help to explain my later analytical errors, let me summarise my thoughts during the game. Firstly I should mention that a few moves earlier I had a slight advantage and was consequently trying to win not yet realising that my position no longer merited it. Thus I did not consider 1 . . . R-B5 since it allowed a repetition of position (the moves before the diagram were R(B5)-B1,Q(K7)-K4). My first thought: 1 . . . Q x NP; 2. N-K7ch (2. R-K1, R-B1; 3. Q-K8, N-B3! (not . . . N-K3; R x N!) is fine as are 2. R-Q1, N-B3; and 2. R-N1, R-B8ch; 3. R x R, Q x Rch; 4. K-N2, N-K3;), K-B1; 3. N x R, Q x Rch; 4. K-N2, P-KN3! 5. Q-K7ch, K-N2; 6. Q-K5ch, K-R3; 7. Q-B4ch with perpetual check, but no more; if, for example, 7. N-Q6, Q-N8ch! 8. K-R3? Q x RPch!

But I wanted more. One by one I rejected 1 . . . N-B3 (2. Q-B5! wins), 1 . . . R-Q1 (2. Q x N, Q x N; 3. Q x RP, Q-N6; 4. R-R5), 1 . . . Q-B5 (2. R-K1! R-B1; 3. N-K7ch, K-R1; 4. N-B5), 1 . . . R-B8ch (2. R x R, N-K7ch; 3. Q x N) and 1 . . . N-R7ch; 2. K-N2, R-K1 (3. N-B7, R x Q; 4. N x Q is uncomfortable); and belatedly realised that I was not going to get more.

By now I was running short of time and decided to revert to 1 . . . Q x P. On the point of playing it I suddenly saw 2. R-N1, R-B8ch; 3. K-N2! winning instantly. Much panicking and several anxious glances at the clock later I was reduced to 1 . . . N-K7ch (insufficient time for a middle game!); 2. K-N2, R-K1; 3. N-B7! R x Q; 4. N x Q, P-QR3; 5. N-Q6, R-K3; and now after 6. R-Q1! White should certainly win. e.g. 6 . . . K-B1; 7.K-B1, N-B8; 8. N-B5(!). I only noticed the possibility of 1 . . . R-B5 after deciding to set the position as a problem. I had grave doubts about the move but was unable to find a clear refutation in time. My thanks to J. D. Taylor for obliging: 2. P-N3! (2. R-K1 is also dangerous but not so clear), N x P; 3. Q-K5! Q-Q2 (forced); 4. Q-N8ch, R-B1; 5. N-K7ch, K-B1! 6. N x R, N x R; 7. N x Pch, Q-K1; 8. Q x P with a likely win. Improvements were suggested also in a) 1 . . . Q x NP: after 2. R-N1? Black has 2 . . . Q x Rch! 3. Q x Q, R-B8ch! 4. Q x R, N-K7ch and . . . N x Q probably winning: (Messrs. MacLean and Sobey)

My congratulations to the prizewinners, Brooks (£20), Abrahams (£13), Sobey (£12) with consolation prizes to Messrs. Kyprianou, Kastanas, Taylor, MacLean and McSheehy.

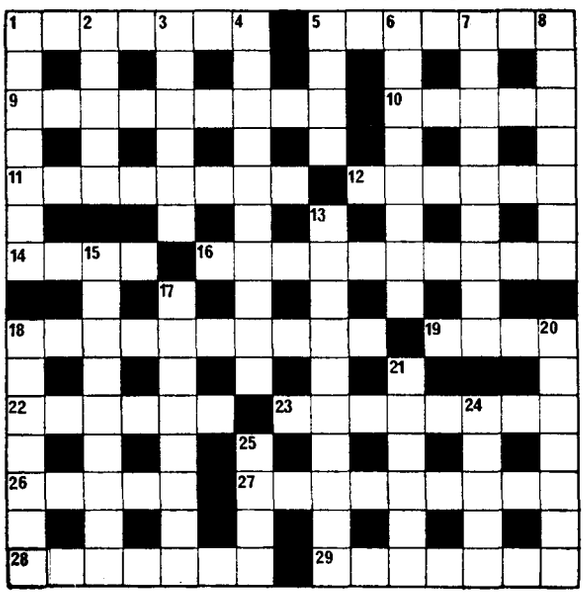
Problem 42:
White to play. Can he win? Entries to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than Wednesday 27 July.



Solution to Problem 40:
Only 1. R-KB2! wins. eg 1 . . . P-N5; 2. R-B8, R-N2ch; K-K6, R x P; 4. K x R, K-R5; 5. K-K6, P-N6; 6. R-KN8, K-R6; 7. K-B5, P-N7; 8. K-B4, K-R7; 9. R-R8ch, K-N8; 10. K-N3, K-B8; 11. R-B8ch, K-N8; 12. R-QR8. Other moves draw.

Weekend Crossword 1224

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1224, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 26 July.



ACROSS

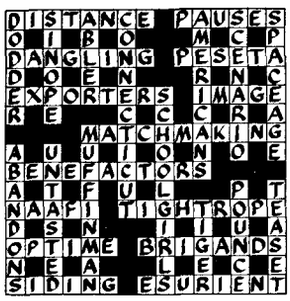
1. The VIP goes on after these hats (7).
5. The German is after a little place in the lakes (7).
9. Fish with a stick for something plain (9).
10. Mix-up for composer (5).
11. Scout who has to be involved with Rovers (8).
12. Losing one's voice sounding like an animal (6).
14. Service for the state (4).
16. Houses from which letters are returned when Father is missing (10).
18. Old relic gets agitated about single bird (10).
19. One or more pros (4).
22. Mother and lord of creation (6).
23. Plane which gives a weather-signal without a line (8).
26. Weapon used in clan ceremonial (5).
27. Vessel which makes mate boast wildly (9).
28. Exists between breaks and doesn't yield (7).
29. Politician for whom no tears are shed (7).

DOWN

1. Where there are drinks tie an Irishman up! (7).
2. Weapons needed by general in an afterthought (5).
3. Possibly run and see just to make certain (6).
4. When there are no means of checking tired fellow-workers (10).
5. Magazine which is loud in untruth (4).
6. Physical fighter (8).
7. The wrong lady includes a line in opposition (9).
8. It can produce a solution from opening in sun (7).
13. Instruments which give tales of leg being broken (10).
15. For articles of clothing the cost varies with the college (9).
17. Despicable behaviour lands a girl in trouble (8).
18. One who tries out a piece of embroidery (7).
20. The screen lets her change (7).
21. Sharpness would be the last word if there were no copper (6).
24. Rest thus in mountain climbing (5).
25. River god (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1222



Prizewinners to No 1222

Mrs E. M. Smith
(Loughborough)
M. C. Marks
(Malvern, Australia)
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Poems by Charles Tomlinson and Tom Disch

Theatres

ALMOST FREE THEATRE. 485 0881. Henry Woolf in Heathcote Williams 'Hancock's Last Half Hour'. Mon. to Sat. eves at 8.30.

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Recorded booking info: 836 5332. 'Romeo and Juliet', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 'The Comedy of Errors' in repertoire. See daily press for dates & times. With: Ibsen's 'Pillars of the Community' (prevs from 27 July) and 'Much Ado About Nothing' (next perf. 8 Aug.) RCS Warehouse season at Donmar Theatre. Week of 18 July 'Schweyk'/'Macbeth' in repertoire. With: Barker's 'That Good Between Us', C. P. Taylor's 'Bandits' and Bond's 'Bingo'. RSC also at Picadilly Theatre in 'Wild Oats'.

CHICHESTER. 0243 86333. 18, 19, 21, 22, 23 July at 7, 'In Order of Appearance'. 20 July at 7, 21, 23 July at 2, 'Julius Caesar'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 722 9301. Mike Leigh's 'Abigail's Party' . . . 'Hilarious' Financial Times.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252 'Volpone'; 'Julius Caesar'; 'State of Revolution'; 'Bedroom Farce'; 'Kemp's Jig'; 'The Camilla Ringbinder Show'; 'East'. See daily press for dates & times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

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Chair: Pat Arrowsmith
Organised by the Committee Against British Brutality in Ireland, 37 Middle Lane, N8.

'WAR ON WANT' talk by campaign representative. London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, W8. Sunday 17 July 7.30 p.m. 30p.

E.N.P. OPEN FORUM: Europe: Lib-Lab; England. Sun. 24 July, Trafalgar Sq. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Chairman Frank Hansford-Miller.

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